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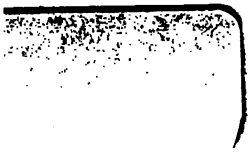
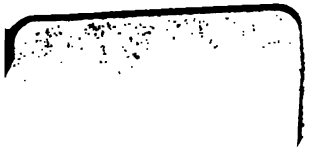
The COMING OF CHRIST

PRE-MILLENNIAL AND IMMINENT





THE
COMING OF CHRIST
BOTH
PRE-MILLENNIAL AND
IMMINENT

BY
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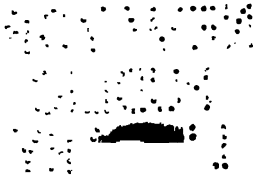

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Isaac Massey Haldeman. Aug. 5. 1922

THE ISSUE!

"IN SUCH AN HOUR AS YE THINK NOT, THE SON OF MAN COMETH."—Matthew 24:44.

CHAPTER I

The Issue

All Christians believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is coming to this world a second time. All are not agreed as to *when* He will come. A large majority believe He will come *after* the *Millennium.*

The word " Millennium " is compounded of two Latin words, *mille,* a thousand, and *annum,* a year. The Greek equivalent is *Chiliad,* a thousand.

By Millennium is understood, popularly, the reign of Christ for a thousand years on or over the earth. The fact as to such a reign is set forth in the book of the Revelation, twentieth chapter and fourth verse:

" They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Those who believe that Christ will not come till after the thousand years, expect His kingdom to be introduced and established, while He is away, through the Gospel. They suppose the Gospel will be preached in all the earth, every soul will at last hear and accept it, all will be regenerated, the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters the face of the deep, the spirit of holiness in man will cast out the spirit of wickedness and sin, there will be neither jealousy nor envy, war will cease, swords will be beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks, the moral health of men will exalt the sanitary condition of the body, and human life shall pass on into the count of centuries. Not only will dumb brutes be changed into quiet and peaceful beasts and cease to tear and spoil, but the earth itself will end its long war against

man, and, instead of briars and thorns, will bring forth the richest herbs, the tenderest grass and fairest fruits, until the very desert shall blossom as the rose.

There are those who see striking evidence of the near approach of this happy time. They see it in the advanced civilization of the hour, in the growing hatred of war, in the frequent resort to National arbitration, in the demand for righteousness not only in the individual and in society, but in government. Every invention which takes away the burden of manual labor, or adds one hour to human leisure, every advance in knowledge, in science, in philosophy, in art, indicates to them that the spirit of the Christ, which is the spirit of the true, the good, the beautiful, is steadily gaining headway. This progress, it is said, is marked and undeniable. Each century has found us better housed, better fed, better clothed, better mannered and altogether more divine, until there are enthusiastic teachers and preachers who, rising superior to the disturbing and stubborn facts of the times, fancy that they already catch glimpses of the links in the shining chain with which Satan is to be bound. Some tell us, with no lack of rhetoric and emphasis, that the purple and the gold of these glad millennial days are on us now; and that only the most determined and fatal pessimism can hesitate to see the widening circle of the Christly times, and that but a brief period of hurrying years remains before we shall be in the full glow and royal splendor of the days of Heaven upon earth.

For a thousand years of unspeakable joy, this kingdom will endure, and then Christ will come in person, there will be a general resurrection, the final judgment, the great conflagration and the end of the world.

Those who hold this view are known familiarly as

Post-Millenarians. They are known as such because they postpone, or place the Coming of Christ after the Millennium.

There are others, however, in the Church of Christ, and they form a large and growing minority, comprising teachers and preachers of the purest lives, widest culture and profoundest scholarship, who believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will come *before* the Millennium, indeed, that there can be no Millennium till He does come. They do not expect the world to be converted by the Gospel and peace brought in through its instrumentality; on the contrary, they expect rather that the world will grow more and more indifferent to that Gospel; that iniquity will abound, lawlessness prevail, and that so far from beating swords into ploughshares, the nations will turn the ploughshares into swords; that nation shall rise against nation, the spirit of war and discord and feverish unrest pervade the whole earth, until the people in their agitation and commotion shall be heard like the surging of the seas, and that the wild beast element in man shall reveal itself in violence, in deeds of blood; that the professing church will grow more and more corrupt in doctrine and worldly in practice, until the Son of God, rejecting it as His witness on the earth, shall spue it from His mouth. Those who believe in this fashion believe further, that while knowledge *will* increase and many run to and fro, and science and philosophy will do marvels until man shall seem like a very God, yet, less and less will the restraining power of God's Spirit be felt; darker will grow the hour, the earth will be given over to the evil in man and the loosened power of the Devil; and that when this combination of wickedness shall have headed itself up in the coming man, the Anti-Christ of

Anti-Christs, then Christ the Lord will descend to Jerusalem, the center of God's earthly dealings, the conspiracy of Satan will be overthrown and the long looked for Millennium, the thousand years, the reign of God upon earth will begin.

In the nature of the case, those who so believe are called *Pre*-Millenarians; for they believe that Christ is coming before the Millennium; that His Advent is not its death-knell, but its marriage-bell, the sounding chime of the angelic notes:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace to men of good-will."

This then is the issue!

Christ coming *before* or *after* the Millennium?

Which?

DOES IT MATTER?

"WE OUGHT TO GIVE THE MORE EARNEST HEED TO THE THINGS WE HAVE HEARD, LEST AT ANY TIME WE SHOULD LET THEM SLIP."—Hebrews 2:1.

CHAPTER II

Does It Matter?

Does it matter whether Christ shall come before or after the Millennium? Is it something wholly unimportant? Is it so unimportant that we need spend but little time in its discussion? Is its discussion purely a secondary matter?

To admit this is to admit that the Coming itself is equally unimportant. The importance then of the issue raised, whether the Coming of Christ is before or after the Millennium, must turn in the last analysis upon the determination whether the Coming of Christ is at all important; and that determination is to be reached by a consideration of the place which the Second Coming of our Lord holds in sacred Scripture.

The moment we open these Scriptures we find an anticipative picture of the Second Coming in Adam, exalted to headship, dominion, glory and power, as the "figure of Him who was to come." Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesies that the Lord is coming in glory. Abraham catches glimpses of Him as the coming man and rejoices in view of His day. Jacob has a vision of the Epiphany and splendor when, surrounded by the angelic host, the Lord God looks down from the height of the golden ladder. Moses sees that revelation of Him in the burning bush, not as the weak and crucified, but as *Yaveh,* the Coming One, coming in triumph. The Psalms are full of the one utterance, uttering His coming and portraying the movement in Heaven when the whole universe shall be attuned in rhythm to the music of His

Kingly descent. Isaiah spells it out in the notes of seraphic splendor and in the announcement of earth's response from exalted mountain, shivering earth and tossing seas. Jeremiah depicts the moment when at His Coming Jerusalem shall no longer be as the forsaken who binds her hair with the braid of widowhood, but as Jerusalem the holy, Jerusalem whose name shall be the Lord our Righteousness, and unto whom shall be gathered the nations, as unto the throne of the Lord. Ezekiel beholds Him coming in the chariots of cherubic glory. Daniel sets Him forth in the center of ten thousand times ten thousands of shining angels, coming to take unto Himself the crowns of all the kings of all the earth, as King of kings and Lord of lords. The minor prophets on every page proclaim that He is coming. Hosea declares it in language of rebuke to the people who have denied Him, Joel in speech that makes the tongue to burn and the ears to tingle, while Habakkuk rises to the heights of sublimity in a diction unequalled, as he testifies of the God who shall come from Teman and the Holy One who shall cover the Heavens with His glory, who shall fill the earth with His praise, before whose feet shall go the pestilence and burning coals, who shall stand and measure the earth, drive asunder the nations, scatter the everlasting mountains, receive the homage of the perpetual hills as they bow before Him and acknowledge that His ways are everlasting, and who shall fill the earth, the whole earth, with the glory of His presence. The last utterance of the Old Testament, as it is of the New, is, that He is Coming.

When you open the New Testament you already hear sounds of the Second Advent before you hear the echoes of the first. John the Baptist talks of the second Coming, not of the first. The Son of God Himself is taken up,

not with His first Coming, but the second. In parable and exhortation, before His disciples, before the multitude and when arraigned before His judges, He talks of His coming again. On the eve of His departure from this world, He comforts His disciples with the thought that He is coming again to receive them unto Himself. No sooner has He gone out of sight into Heaven, than two angels come down with swift descent and hurrying speech to tell the disciples as they gaze heavenward that this same Jesus shall come again. On the day of Pentecost Peter finds the emphasis of His power in the declaration that this Jesus who has been crucified, dead, buried, raised again, and ascended to the throne of the Highest, is coming from thence in the plenitude of His Kingly power. Stephen the martyr sees Heaven opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of the glory in the attitude of one who is about to come forth and visit the earth once more. In writing his epistles to the Thessalonians the Apostle Paul closes each chapter of both epistles with the declaration that the Lord, even the Son of God, is coming again. Peter and James and John join in the universal testimony; Peter, that the appearing and glory of the Lord is the longing of his heart, James, that He who is the Judge already standeth at the door, and John, the Beloved, that the very hope of that Coming so exercises his heart that he, as all who look for Him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure. Nay! so full is the Apostle John of this fact of the Coming, that he devotes one whole book of twenty-two chapters to the description of it. Between portrayals of the most solemn import, he represents the Lord Himself, from time to time, crying down from Heaven to the listening ears: "Behold I am coming quickly;" and the last utterance from the unseen

Holy, from the lips of the Son of God Himself, is the masterful assurance that He is coming, surely coming.

In short, the Second Coming is mentioned from one end of the Bible to the other, in type and figure, in form and symbol, in open prophecy and allusive utterance, in exhortation and discourse. Examination will show that it is mentioned in connection with every fundamental doctrine; with the resurrection from among the dead, the sonship of believers, the recognition of the departed and the distribution of rewards. It is bound up with every sublime promise; with the promise of likeness to Christ, satisfaction of soul, victory over death, victory over sin and Satan, and deliverance of the earth from the bondage of corruption. It is bound up with every practical exhortation. Does the Apostle exhort us to meet together on the Lord's day and not to forsake by any means the assembling of ourselves together? He does so in view of the Coming of the Lord. He bids us break bread because we do show forth the Lord's death till He comes. We are exhorted to love God, to love one another, to patience, to a holy life, to watchfulness, to Christian activity, to moderation, to abiding in Him, against judging one another, to steadfastness, to pastoral fidelity, to faithfulness in preaching, because He is coming. In fact, this Coming is declared to be the central chord of all vital Christian life; and it is vibrated and touched again and again by exhortation and illustration as the exalted incentive and unfailing impulse. It is said to be spoken of in one way or another in at least every twenty verses of the New Testament, and is thus above and beyond any other fact or doctrine of Scripture, pre-eminently predominant.

To admit, as it must be admitted, that the Second

Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ has such a pre-eminence in Holy Scripture, that as to statement it easily outranks any other subject in the whole scale and scheme of revelation, and then to say that it is a matter wholly unimportant and ought not to engage the serious attention of the devout student of the Word, is to be guilty of the most limitless illogic.

If, on the contrary, the very prominence of the theme classifies it as of supreme importance, then the determination of its nearness or remoteness is a matter of equal import.

How far this nearness or remoteness is important may be seen in the effect produced by either conclusion upon their respective advocates.

It is clear enough that if the Coming of Christ cannot possibly take place till a thousand years after the world's conversion, then the event as a practical fact in the present life of the Christian is of little avail and cannot arouse him, either to interest, or enthusiasm; certainly it will not be a governing factor in his daily life, he will not feel himself under obligation to say much about it; and if a preacher, it will occupy but a very small place in his conversation, his preaching, or in his teaching. However wonderful and glorious it may be considered in itself as the display of the person and glory of the Son of God; however much it may be the justification and emphasis of all His previous claims, it is altogether too far in the background of the picture to centralize our attention or move us beyond the general acceptation of the fact.

If, on the contrary, the Lord is coming before the Millennium; if His continued absence means the deepening of the spiritual night around us; if the gloom can

be dissipated only by His Coming; if it be at all possible to hasten that Coming and drive away that night; if nothing in the way of predicted events has been actually placed between us and that Coming; if the Lord has commanded us to look, to watch and be ready in any hour for Himself; if it is true that we might meet Him at any time in any turn of the road and hear His voice in the midst of daily duties done or undone, then that Coming is of pre-eminent interest, its relation to the circumstances and events of the present hour are such that no Christian can dare, even for a moment, to be indifferent to it. If it means the end of war and the reign of peace, then I ought to pray for it ere contending armies shall break and shatter into bloody war. If it means my deliverance from the grave, my translation into immortality, glad meeting and fellowship with those who have passed through the silent gates, then I ought to be on the tip-toe of expectation and desire for it. If this Coming is to be without warning, then I have no time to spend in idle pleasure and careless indifference, not only because of my own soul and individual things at stake, but because of my fellow being who has no life of God and Christ in his soul; for his sake, surely, I ought to be up and doing, and crying in his ears the invitation of the Gospel of peace, warning him that he has no time to waste, that any moment the door of grace may be shut and the door of judgment swing open on its brazen hinges.

If Post-Millennialism is true, then Christ's visible presence on this earth is shut out by the dimness and distance of uncounted centuries.

If Pre-Millennialism is true, then Christ as a living and visible presence is just upon the horizon, and every

closing day or breaking morn may see His face and answer to His call.

Post-Millennialism seeks to make the world better, to purify society, to set up the kingdom while the King is away, to transform the King, Himself, into an invisible, ethereal, spiritual presence, giving Him a bride in outward glory and splendor, but never allowing that bride during all the while of her association with Him in His universal reign, to catch one glimpse of the Bridegroom's face or behold the outline of a kingly form.

Pre-Millennialism seeks to call out of the world a bride for the absent and rejected King, and continually whispers to this bride that her joy is not to reign while He is absent, but to suffer; not to live gloriously with the kings of the earth as a wanton wife in the absence of her husband, but in separation and in the path of pilgrimage; and that her joy of joys will be, not to love an unseen Lord but to be presented to Him, to gaze upon His face, to bathe in His glory, to revel in His light, and with Him, to rule and reign in manifested splendor, in open triumph.

The Post-Millennialist looks upon this hour as the time of victory for God.

The Pre-Millennialist looks upon it as the hour in which the darkness in man and the evil in Satan are holding high carnival.

Those who believe that the Millennium must prevail before Christ will come, take all the promises of the Old Testament, all the predictions concerning Israel and Mount Zion for the last days, and hand them bodily and boldly over to the Church. They style the Church Mount Zion and look upon the Christian as the logical evolution of the Jew, religiously.

Those who expect the Son of God before the Mil-

lennium, who anticipate judgment before glory, take all the predictions of the latter times and give them to Israel. To them Mount Zion, Jerusalem, no more mean the Church than earth can stand for Heaven, or Abraham, the Patriarch, be confounded with Michael, the Archangel. To them the Jew and the Gentile are as far apart in the dealings of God and the blessings which shall come to each from His hand, as the throne of God is distinct from His footstool.

The Post-Millennialist calls the Church the Kingdom.

The Pre-Millenarian feels that the nomenclature of the Church as seen in the title rôle of its office bearers forbids such transmutation; it is impossible for him, even with the most liberal allowance for spiritualizing, to make a Deacon into a Duke, or an Elder into an Earl; while pastors and evangelists, to him, seem utterly out of place as functionaries in a system of royalty.

In order to find ground for the doctrine that the Millennium must precede the Second Coming, the Post-Millennialist is forced to set aside, or ignore the pessimistic statements of the Apostles concerning the last times.

In order to sustain the opposite thesis the Pre-Millenarian draws special attention and gives particular emphasis to those very statements.

It must be evident, therefore, to the most casual reader, that these two views are diametrically opposed, and that they affect, not only the attitude of the Church in relation to the Coming—the one setting aside that Coming as an imminent factor, the other exalting it as such—but it affects the whole exegesis of the Word of God. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the results of interpretation flowing out of each of these distinct lines of thought are so radically antagonistic, so utterly diverse, so absolutely

irreconcilable, that one or the other must be wholly right, exact, scientifically correct, and the other as absolutely false, ignorant or blunderingly perverse.

If the Bible, upon any fair and unprejudiced examination, permits with equal facility the deduction of either of these views, then the impression upon the outside observer must sooner or later be that this Book, instead of being a clear and infallible guide to the earnest seeker after truth, is, at the best, but a contradictory and confusing transcript.

In the face of this ultimate, or the alternate impression; in view of the contradictory moral attitude brought about by one or the other of the doctrines: because of the antagonistic interpretation, and consequent publication to the Church and the world which such interpretation demands, is it at all tolerable to say that the issue between Pre-Millennialism and Post-Millennialism is unimportant?

I trow not!

Nay! Above everything else, the simple fact that the Son of God has announced to His Church that He is coming back, makes it a bounden duty that I should know whether that Coming is possible in my day, or not till ten centuries have broken into dust beneath the tread of time.

It is highly important that I should know it.

Aye! And I must make every effort to know it if it *can* be known!

CAN THE TRUTH BE KNOWN?

"THAT WHICH MAY BE KNOWN OF GOD IS MANIFEST TO THEM: FOR GOD HAS SHEWED IT UNTO THEM."—Romans 1:19.

CHAPTER III

Can the Truth be Known?

Admitting then the importance of the issue, whether Christ will come before or after the Millennium, the further question arises, Can the truth be known? Is it possible or impossible? Is it simply a matter of interpretation, an interpretation to be decided by the keenness of intellect, the versatility of individual genius, or the weight of majorities? Is there no clear, definite, precise standard, no positive "thus saith the Lord" which may not be turned and twisted as a nose of wax, no absolute rule by which we may be guided without error, fault or mistake? Must we confess that the whole doctrine is a subject with which to play skittles, and that no final and imperial decision can be reached?

To take such a position in respect to the Second Coming of Christ, and that, too, in face of the prominence it obtains in the Book, the intimate relation it sustains to the profoundest doctrines and most searching exhortations to duty and responsibility; to take such a position, is not only to strike a blow at the Coming itself, but at the very claim of the Book to be a full and accurate revelation from the God of certainty and truth. The conclusions inevitable from such a position are so far reaching, their import to us as Christians so destructive to all final faith in the God and Christ of the Bible, that it is impossible to accept that proposition, even, for a moment.

I have a reverent faith in the unity, harmony and clearness of this Book. I believe that it is inspired of God. I believe God has spoken not only His thoughts but His

words, and that we have under our eye the very accents in which He has seen fit to communicate His mind and will to us.

In this hour when in the name of a pretentious science and a vaunted analysis men are seeking to pull apart and throw discredit on the Word, demonstrating openly and more often in covert fashion that it is the word of man and not as Paul affirms it to be, the Word of God, it behooves every earnest seeker after the truth to give the Book the opportunity to make itself known, by listening first of all to what it *says,* discrediting firmly every hypothesis, imagination, and concept of man, till it has said its say. What does the Book say, not what we *think* it says, is the first and all important step to ascertain what meaning it wishes to convey.

Our Lord has rested His claim to Messiahship, to divinity, to Lordship, to the whole integrity of His name and mission on an appeal to the Scriptures of Israel.

He has said: "Search the Scriptures." If by His express commandment we are to search the pages of the Old Testament to find the anticipative testimony concerning Himself on the lips of prophet, priest and king, how strong the obligation for us to examine with equal fidelity what He has said in His own words, whether we confront those words which He spake as Jesus of Nazareth, or words which He spake by the Spirit through the mouth of His accredited Apostles!

I desire to do this now.

I shall inquire,

1. What does the Lord Jesus Christ Himself declare in His own words concerning the manner in which the Gospel is to be received during His absence?

2. What picture does He give us of the course of the professing Church in this age?

3. What do the Apostles say concerning the matter?

4. What do Christ and His disciples teach as to the course and character of this age?

5. What do Christ and His disciples say about the introduction of the kingdom? What is the initial power and factor that shall make it manifest? Is it the Gospel, is it by increasing triumph of the principles of peace and good will, or is it by steady degeneration and the Coming of the Lord personally to act in judgment? What do the Scriptures say positively, unequivocally, on one or other of these issues?

6. What attitude do the Scriptures bid us take in relation to the Coming of Christ? Do they tell us to look for, to be in constant readiness for it? Do they forbid us to set an hour, to hint at dates? Or do they unhesitatingly and emphatically teach us that the Coming of Christ is a matter with which we are not for the present, either as a church or individuals, to be particularly occupied?

These are the general lines which will be followed in the earnest endeavor to find what the Scriptures do teach in respect to this all supreme theme, the Coming of our Lord.

THE RATIO OF THE GOSPEL

"ALL MEN HAVE NOT FAITH."—2 Thessalonians 3:2.

"AND HE DID NOT MANY MIGHTY WORKS THERE, BECAUSE OF THEIR UNBELIEF."—Matthew 13:58.

The sower is any one bearing forth the Word of life.

Sowing is scattering, preaching, or proclaiming it far and near, in order that it may fall into the human heart and bring forth perfect fruit to the glory of God.

The time of sowing is any time while our Lord is away.

The number and character of grounds upon which the seed falls represent the general ratio of reception and the characteristic hindrance during the time of sowing.

The two points we need to consider now are:

1. The ratio of reception.
2. The characteristic hindrance.

The Ratio of Reception

Four parts of ground were sowed over, but only one part out of four received the seed and brought forth fruit unto the sower. One part out of four! or that which is relative, partial, *fractional.* Four stands for a whole. We speak of the "four points of the compass," "the four corners of the earth," and in the nature of the case the four grounds of the parable represent the whole earth as the theatre of the Gospel sowing which is to take place during the absence of the Lord. As the reception and fruitage of the seed is the reception and fruitage of the Gospel in the world during the whole period of that absence, we have, necessarily, a forecast plainly proclaiming that throughout the world during that period the reception of the Gospel will be relative, partial, fractional.

While no intention is here indicated of being mathematical and precise in the exact number of those who at any time in this particular period shall receive the Gospel, it is, to say the least, not a little curious that at this moment of supposed Gospel progress, not more than a fourth part of the world's entire population make any pretense

to accept the Gospel; and among those who are thus accredited as the receivers of the Word of God, are the so-called "Christian" nations, in which the vast bulk have no saving knowledge of the Son of God.

Let any one turn his gaze upon his own community and make an estimate of those who officially confess the name of God's Son by church ordinance and relation, and he will find that they are but a fractional portion of the population. If in addition to this he will make a rigid examination into those whose conduct bears witness that the Gospel has been enthroned in their life, he will be startled, and perhaps alarmed, at the steadily diminishing ratio and become convinced that the Gospel has only a relative sway among men. He who beside all this knows that the living, overwhelming millions of his kind are in the earth today with no fellowship for the Gospel and no pretended acknowledgment of its power; who sees that Bethlehem where Jesus was born, Calvary where He died, and Bethany from whence He ascended, are in the hands of the False Prophet; that Mahomet is revered where He is now scarcely known, will see little evidence of anything like a present universal triumph of the Gospel. Indeed, a faithful reading of history will show that at no time in the past, even in the loftiest moment of Apostolic evangelization, when the sound of the Gospel had gone throughout the whole earth, when every ear under Heaven was said to have heard, did the whole world receive that Gospel. The thousands who hymned the name of Jesus, bowed the knee and owned Him as their God, were but scattered sands upon the seashore of human life, paltry thousands to the unconverted millions who, if ever they heard, turned a deaf ear and went downward to death and darkness with no hope in God. At no point in human history

since the Master left us can we find a single hour when all the earth received the story of His tragic love, or when the good ground only could be found beneath the toiling sower's feet. And to-day, if we shall call the roll in heathen lands, own the sacrifice and unselfish devotion of the sowers who still go forth to sow, and verify the power of God in pagan temples overthrown, in human lives uplifted and redeemed, even to-day, when the last voice has responded and the last song has died away, there will be heard the tramp of other thousands who have never heard or known the way. As we look steadily we shall see from age to age as the sower passes on, he finds the beaten wayside, the flinty rock, the springing thorns, and discovers that the good ground which at the last receives his seed, is but a fractional part of that wide world in which he was bid to cast the germs of endless life.

This much for the *ratio* of the reception. Let us consider

The Ratio of Hindrance

There are hindrances to the rooting and fruitage of the seed.

These hindrances are three in number. The fowls, the stony grounds and the thorns.

The fowls snatch away that which was sown upon the wayside. The stony ground allows only the surface to be penetrated, opposes its essential hardness, its unchangeable character to the seed, and permits no cleavage, not a root to enter in; while the thorns invade that ground where the seed has ample soil and smother and choke out the hoped-for life.

The Lord has declared that the fowls set forth the *Wicked One*, Satan and his untiring energy of destruction, and that wickedness and treason both to God and

man which would snatch out of the cold or indifferent heart every permeating germ of the divine and spiritual life.

The stony ground hearer is a picture of that natural *stony heart,* that "stony heart" of which Ezekiel the prophet speaks (chapter 36, verse 26), in which there may be sentiment and sensibility, but not an element of the divine rootage. It is that *flesh* which, no matter how often it may be helped and cleansed, is still the flesh, and undivine.

The thorns choking out the good seed is that *world* which, with its riches and cares, its labor and luxury, is no friend of grace to help us on to God.

The World, the Flesh and the Devil! A triumvirate of opposition to the Word of God, to the Gospel of grace.

And what page of history does not bear the record of their opposition? What age in which they have not resisted and rendered fruitless much of the sower's toil? Who will deny that these enemies are at work to-day with all the energy sufficient to hinder and frustrate a widespread harvest to the sower's hand?

Nor does the parable hold out any horizon on which the lurid gleam of this opposition does not play, now and then lifting a forked tongue as if from a serpent's mouth. The sower's course, it is true, brings him at last to good and receptive ground, but all about him the three-fold resisting forces hem in and make manifest that his victory is but partial, relative and fractional to the end.

This parable then teaches not only that there would not be a universal reception of the Gospel while our Lord was away, but that during the whole time of His absence it would be met and hindered by a trinity of evil; that while the Father, Son and Holy Spirit would seek to send

forth this Gospel gladness, this trinity of evil, the world, the flesh and the Devil, with unceasing and mysterious unity, would oppose and hinder to the last.

A not universal reception!

An unbroken opposition to the end!

These two great prophecies the parable makes, and makes them through the mouth of Him who is the Truth.

And thus this parable is, in itself, the death knell to the hope of any millennium through the preaching of the Gospel.

THE COURSE OF THE PROFESSING CHURCH IN THIS AGE

(The Testimony of Christ.)

"I HAVE SOMEWHAT AGAINST THEE, BECAUSE THOU HAST LEFT THY FIRST LOVE."—Revelation 2:4.

CHAPTER V

The Course of the Professing Church in this Age

(The Testimony of Christ.)

The Church has been left in this world as the Sower, the Seed-bearer, the Light, the Witness to the Truth, the Reincarnation of Christ, the Temple of God, the Habitation of God through the Spirit.

Its work is to build a new man, to develop a new and spiritual humanity, to illuminate the world's darkness with Heaven's morning, and answer definitely the continual crying, "What is truth?" by revealing Christ objectively, the "Man in the glory," as the enthronement of the Father, and subjectively, in the soul of the believer—a new divine man—as the image of the Father.

This was the concept!

What was to be its realization? Would the Church fulfill these great lines and march on in unbroken triumph over sin and wrong till the Lord should return to receive from her hands a world conquered in His name? or would there be failure and marring just as everything man has touched has failed and been marred, even, when fresh from the hands of God?

The great Teacher responds unequivocally.

He responds in the second parable of this thirteenth chapter of Matthew.

As in the parable of the Sower, so here He furnishes His own interpretation.

The parable itself is stated in verses 24 to 30, the explanation, verses 37 to 44.

A man sows good seed in his field. While men sleep an enemy comes and sows tares among the wheat, then goes his way. When the wheat appears the tares appear also. The servants come to the householder and ask him whence they are. He answers that an enemy has done it, forbids them to root out the tares lest, looking so much like the wheat, they root out the wheat also. He commands them to let both grow together till the harvest. He assures his servants that in the time of the harvest he will send forth his reapers and they shall gather together the tares into bundles to burn them, but the wheat shall be gathered into the barn.

In His interpretation our Lord declares that the Sower is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom, the tares the children of the Devil, the enemy who sowed them the Devil himself. The harvest is the end of the world, the reapers are the angels, the gathering, binding of the tares and the casting of them into the fire, is the burning of all who are the children of the Devil. The gathering of the wheat into the barn is the shining forth of the righteous in the kingdom of the Father.

In the analysis of this parable we are to note:

1. The Householder, the Sower, is the Son of Man, the Christ of God.

2. The servants are His witnesses, the members of His household, working for, bearing witness to, and making profession in His Name.

3. The field is the world.

4. The good seed are the children of the kingdom, the fruit of that seed which was sown in the good ground of the first parable, the result of that preaching where the Word enters into the heart.

5. The sleep of the servants is the unwatchfulness of the servants of Christ.

6. The enemy taking advantage of the carelessness of the servants is the Devil, the Wicked One of the parable of the Sower.

7. The tares introduced into the field in proximity to the wheat are the children of the Devil.

The tare, or darnel, or cheat, is a weed resembling wheat. It cannot be fully discerned till the harvest, then it is seen to be spurious and not of the same root as the wheat. As the wheat represents the children of the kingdom and is the result of the divine seed, so the tares represent an imitation of the children of the kingdom, those who have an outward decency and morality, perhaps, but who are the result, not of the Word of God, but the word, the doctrine and propaganda of the Devil; hence, in the tares we get a profession of Christ, false in doctrine, not rooted in the divine truth, nor in the divine life; a profession of Christ that will not stand the test of the Word, the Blood or the Spirit. *It is a corrupt profession of Christ,* not owned of God. And it is to be noted that the illumination of the parable is in that thought of corruption, and marks the complete change in the Devil's method; for, in the first parable, he sought to destroy the seed, now he seeks to mix the false with the true, weaken, hinder, adulterate and, if possible, root out the true.

Remember then that in the parable of the wheat and the tares, whatever else we get, we do get a corruption of professed Christianity.

8. The harvest is the end of the world (*age*), it is the closing moment of this dispensation of grace.

9. The wheat and the tares growing side by side in the field till the end of the harvest is this corrupt pro-

fession of Christ continuing so till the end of the age.

10. The separation of the wheat and the tares by the hand of the reapers is the execution of judgment on the ungodly by the hand of the angels at the end of this period; but it is to be noted that the angels come from the presence of the Lord as from the presence of the Son of man, that this title is in use only when He is seen as the executor of judgment, and as He will execute judgment for the first time at His Second Coming, then the statement as to the angels is only another way of saying that He is coming a second time, and that when He does so come He will find, not a world united in faith and hope before Him, but a world containing a *mixed profession of Christianity,* a field occupied by the children of God and the children of the Devil.

Whatever else then this parable may teach it does teach, and that unequivocally, that when the Lord comes He will find a corrupt, impure profession in His name; that this profession will require His judgment to separate the false from the true, the precious from the vile.

What the Son of God teaches here He increasingly emphasizes in the parable of the Mustard Tree.

A mustard tree is the smallest of things in the beginning.

A man takes a mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds, and sows it in his field.

It becomes a great tree, so great that birds of the air find shelter therein.

Three things are to be noted in this parable:

1. The insignificant origin.
2. The great expansion.
3. The shelter afforded the birds of the air.

1. As the mustard seed is intended to set forth the kingdom of Heaven in this world, and that kingdom of Heaven is the profession of Christ, and that profession is known outwardly as the church of Christ, then in the insignificant origin of the tree, in the small seed, the "smallest of all seeds," we have the small, the insignificant beginning of the professed church of Christ.

And indeed nothing could have been more insignificant or apparently less likely to affect the world than that church of Christ which at the beginning was made up of the poor and the outcast, and whose special claim to distinction was that they believed in and worshipped as God the man who had been hung to death as a malefactor on a Roman cross between two brutal and offensive thieves. Nothing seemed less likely to win its way in the world than the story that this crucified and dead peasant had been raised from His borrowed grave, and exalted to the right hand of the majesty on high, and owned there as very God.

One hundred and twenty men and women, all told, was a singularly insignificant and insufficient number with which to face a hostile world in the hope of converting it and revolutionizing it for God.

2. The expansion of this tree is the expansion of the feeble and insignificant profession of Christ.

Just as that tree grew, threw its branches outward, upward, and on every side, so the profession of Christ soon filled the world, throwing out a branch here, and another there, until to-day these branches are to be found in every part of the habitable globe. But it must not be forgotten that the tree sends out its branches in exact proportion as it roots itself downward in the earth. Unlike the wheat which loosens at the bottom as it ripens at the top, the

mustard tree deepens its hold on the earth as it expands. This is a declaration that the profession of Christ in the world would, indeed, expand and fill the whole earth, but that its expansion would be in proportion to its rootage in the world. In short, the mustard tree is the prophetic declaration that professing Christianity would be more and more of the earth, less and less spiritual and Heavenly, as the age went on.

3. The shelter which the tree affords to the birds of the air, is the professing church giving shelter to him whom these birds in the first parable represent as the Wicked One, even, the Devil. There can be no doubt of this intention, for the same word is translated fowls in the one, and birds in the other parable. The profession of Christ in this world, the professing church of Christ, becoming the shelter, the refuge and dwelling place of the Devil as well as the Son of God, that is the simple English of the parabolic forecast. The church the habitation for the enemy as well as the Friend of souls!

He who reads the history of the professing church in that hour when it was thrusting its branches forth and casting its shadow over all the earth, will find little difficulty in being persuaded that Satan found within it an equal shelter with the God whose name it bore. When we read of the sin and iniquity committed by its authority, the persecution of which it was guilty, the blood of the innocent and helpless which it shed in the name of a forgiving Saviour; when we read of its fiendish deeds, how it took men and laid them on racks and broke them on wheels, boiled them alive in oil, put out their eyes, flayed them, cut them to pieces, slowly burned them with fire, stopping not to slay and torture helpless women and children, establishing the Inquisition and calling it

" holy "; he who will read all this may well believe that it had become the hold of every foul spirit and a cage of every unclean and *hateful "bird."* Revelation 18:2. He who will turn away from the doctrinal controversies of the early church, when for the sake of the difference of a letter in a word whole communities were arrayed against each other, and brother slew brother in the name of Jesus Christ upon the church steps, and made the very altars to run with blood; he who will turn away from the paganism of the Romish church and the midnight blackness of spiritual ignorance with which she filled the earth in the middle ages, to our own times, and read the infidelity in the professing Protestant church, read the utterances of representative men and teachers in her communion who deny the Incarnation, repudiate vicarious sacrifice, make light of the story of the resurrection and refine the risen Son of God into nothing more than the spirit and essence of truth, or, at most, the disembodied ghost of a man who called himself a Messiah, *mistaken in his claims, but authoritative in his morals;* he who will read the works of modern professors of theology who convict the very prophets whom they hold up as exemplars of righteousness, of absolute literary fraud and deliberate piracy; who demonstrate with cool precision that the higher critic of to-day is better informed concerning the mistakes of Moses than was He who claimed that Moses wrote of Him, and who prove, to their own satisfaction and the belief of many followers, that Jesus Christ our Lord, was limited in intelligence and would, if He were here to-day, deny some of the statements He once so unqualifiedly made; he who will come face to face with all this, and remember that these teachers and representative men in the modern church are not a small mi-

nority, but are the presidents of colleges, the teachers of theology, the men who are preparing the preachers of the coming day, and who claim boldly to be the culture, the sane scholarship and decent, self-respecting exegetes, the only real Biblical interpreters of the hour; he who faces and knows all this may well be persuaded that the professing church of the present has not only spread its branches abroad to the utmost limits of the earth, but that it is affording now, as then, a shelter for those birds whom the Son of God with unfaltering speech characterizes as the Wicked one, the Wicked one and his manifold and subtle agents; and that the professing church of today, even, as He foretold, is the sheltering place of the Devil as well as the habitation of God.

But if we did not have a single page of history to corroborate the forecast, the forecast still remains, and remains as a declaration on the part of the Son of God that the professing church would become *a sheltering place for the Devil as well as God.* And when it is remembered that in the story of the wheat and the tares you have the Devil introducing his own children among those who are the children of the kingdom, it ought not to be a surprise, but evidence of the logic of things, that in the mustard tree he enters in himself and finds habitation. All this being true, it ought not to be a surprise, but a further evidence of the continuity and consistency of the discourse, that in the next parable we have the picture of a woman hiding leaven in a lump of meal till the whole lump is leavened.

The record of this parable is in the thirty-third verse. The actual statement is that, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

According to Doctor Adam Clarke, "Leaven is a species of corruption, produced by fermentation and tends to putrefaction."

It is in itself a corrupt thing, and corrupts that with which it comes in contact.

The children of Israel were not permitted to have it in their house during the observance of the passover, that passover which, according to Saint Paul, is a type of the sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The penalty for having leaven in the home was nothing less than excommunication from the commonwealth of Israel, even as it is written:

"Whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel." Exodus 12:15.

Leaven must not come in contact with the offering of blood. "Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven." Exodus 34:25.

There are but two exceptions in Scripture where leaven is permitted of God, and in both cases its introduction is intended to indicate the presence of that which is distasteful to God:

The feast in Leviticus 23:17. It occurs in the ordinance of the wave loaves to be lifted up on the day of Pentecost, and is a symbol of the presence of the flesh in the first loaf of professing children of the kingdom, presented before God on that historic day. The other exception is to be found recorded in Amos 4:5, and is meant as a witness of God that the offering which He here commands to be brought unto Him is from the hand of a people judged and condemned on account of corruption and hypocrisy.

Our Lord uses leaven as a symbol of bad doctrine. He

warns the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They did not understand Him at the first and supposed that He spoke only of bread. He corrected their error and then it is written:

"Then understood they how he bade them beware of the *doctrine* of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."

As the Pharisees were hypocrites because they stood for a form of godliness but denied the power thereof, and the Sadducees stood for the denial of the resurrection, saying there was neither angel nor spirit, then evidently the Lord uses leaven, not merely as a symbol of its penetrating and all pervading power, but as a characteristic symbol of false doctrine, such doctrines as ritualism and materialism.

He warns the disciples against the leaven of Herod. Mark 8:15. And as the character and actions of Herod were of unspeakable wickedness, He uses leaven to characterize all that was vile, and wicked, and outrageous in the official head of the Jewish nation.

In short, the Son of God never uses leaven as a symbol of good doctrine. He never uses it in any other than a bad sense, never uses it except to draw attention to that which is bad and which He repudiates.

The Apostle Paul takes leaven as a symbol of the errors of Judaism introduced into the church, and working to the detriment of the faith and comfort of the Gentile converts. He calls this error "persuasion," and compares it to leaven, saying:

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Galatians 5:8, 9.

The same Apostle uses leaven to portray the vain boasting of the flesh; comparing this glorying in the flesh to the action of leaven in a lump, saying:

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." 1 Corinthians 5:6.

He makes use of leaven to emphasize his warnings against the works of the flesh and characterizes these works as, "the leaven of malice and wickedness." 1 Corinthians 5:8.

He declares that the church at Corinth showed the effect of leaven, for they were, he says, "puffed up." 1 Corinthians 5:2.

Thus Ritualism, Materialism, Herodianism, Legalism, Vainglory, Malice, Wickedness, and the Works of the Flesh are set forth and indicated by the Apostle as leaven. Our Lord and His Apostle are both at one in testifying that leaven stands for that which is evil, and only for that which is evil; it is evil and corrupt doctrine, it is evil and corrupt energy of the flesh; never! not in a single instance, either in the Old or the New Testament, is it ever used to indicate that which is good, or used simply as an indication of its power of penetration alone; always it stands for corrupt, that is to say, adulterated doctrine, and the energy and lust of the flesh. From end to end of the Word of God it is used as evil, evil only; and is never used except as such.

The woman hides the leaven.

A woman in Scripture is used either in a good or bad sense; here she is used in a bad sense; not only because she hides, but because she hides that which is bad and corrupt, and hides it in that which is otherwise good and incorrupt.

The woman hides the leaven in a certain measure of meal which is called a "lump."

In his epistle to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, the Apostle speaks of the professing church as a lump

and declares that old leaven has entered into it; by the strongest analogy therefore the lump in the Parable represents the professing church; the woman hiding the leaven is some depraved system represented by her, hiding, introducing false doctrine into, and permeating the professing church with the energy and motive of the flesh. The lump is divided into three measures.

It is a somewhat striking coincidence, to say the least, that at this present moment the professing church of Christ is divided into three great parts, the Roman church, the Greek, and the Protestant church.

The whole lump becomes leavened, permeated; and thus the whole professing church according to the prophecy is to be filled with corrupt, adulterated doctrine, and moved, energized, by the power of the flesh; it is this false doctrine, this energy of the flesh which is to give the professing church its world-wide expansion and apparent triumph.

If therefore the mustard tree gives us the outward expansion of the church by reason of its identification with, and rootage in the earth, the leaven is that falsehood in doctrine, that corruption in teaching, and that energy of the flesh and not the Spirit, which give us the mainspring of action.

In the course of these parables nothing is more startling than the attitude and method of the Devil. In the first parable he seeks to destroy, in the second he endeavors to corrupt, in the third he makes use of that which he would destroy, and in the fourth takes the place of authority for the dissemination of his own falsehood and the expression of his own energy. The illustrations which set forth this Satanic fashion are striking. In the first parable a bird snatches away the seed; in the second

an enemy sows cheat among the true seed; in the third the corrupted Christianity in the world becomes the shelter for the birds of evil, for the Devil himself, and in this fourth, a woman hides that which is sour and corrupting in a definite measure of dough.

How strange, how mysterious it all seems! But in this very mystery of evil mixing with and supplanting the good and the true, we have the definition and explanation of the title of all these parables, the meaning of the divine discourse, "the Mysteries of the Kingdom." A mystery that the good seed should not bring forth fruit in all places sown over; mystery that the Devil should succeed in bringing in tares and corrupting the profession of Christ; mystery that this corrupt profession should expand, rather than the true profession, and fill the whole earth with its darkness; mystery that the professing church should become a shelter for him who is the enemy of God and man; mystery that in the professing church of Christ we should have the doctrine of the Devil rather than the clear, sunlit doctrine of God. It is the object of this discourse to forewarn and to explain to him who "hath ears to hear," this mystery.

To attempt to break the force of the unity of these four parables is useless. To admit that the introduction of the tares is the corruption of professing Christianity and then speak of the Mustard tree as the expansion of a pure and divine Christianity, is absolutely illogical. To take a fractional reception of the Gospel, the mixing of that fraction with the spurious, and the spreading of this mixed and spurious profession in all directions over the earth, and then testify that the sour, corrupt leaven, always used by our Lord and His disciples as the symbol of false doctrine and the unwelcome energy of the flesh,

is the final supremacy of an untainted Gospel and the victory of an incorrupt church in the world, is to so jar the whole movement of the discourse, to so charge it with contradiction and inconsistency, that all unity of meaning and intelligence of interpretation are at an end; to do this in the face of the fact that the whole Word of God as well as the unfailing nature of leaven are brought to bear in evidence of that which is pervadingly and penetratingly corrupt and condemned of God, is to render a sane exegesis impossible, and make the interpretation of Scripture a matter of school boy frolic and unintelligent guess.

Gathering up, therefore, the testimony in the line of its legitimacy, it is evident that in this discourse, so far, the Son of God declares that:

1. At no time during His absence would there be a universal reception of the Gospel.

2. That the Gospel would be opposed by the World, the Flesh and the Devil till the end of the age.

3. That the church would grow unwatchful and fall asleep.

4. That the Devil would take advantage of this unwatchfulness and introduce his own children into the professing body, or institute systems in the name of Christ that were false and corrupt to the core.

5. That this corrupt profession of Christianity would draw its sustenance and strength from the World, spread its branches in every direction and become in the name of Christ, the shelter, the abiding place for the Devil and his multiple agents.

6. That Satan, by means of some false system typified by a woman, would adulterate the doctrine of Christ till the professing church would be full of error, the actual

ignorance of the truth, and the reprehensive energy of the flesh.

7. That this condition of affairs, the evil and the good in the professing church, the Son of God and the Devil, both using the doctrine of God and the profession of truth for diverse ends, would continue in increasing accent till the Lord himself should come again to enter into judgment upon the very body that should bear His name.

Such is the testimony of the Son of God concerning the history of the professing church in this age as revealed in His unbroken discourse of the thirteenth of Matthew.

There is certainly not the slightest hint here given that this church, or even this profession in His name, would ever bring the world at last in joyous captivity to the feet of a coming King.

THE COURSE OF THE PROFESSING CHURCH IN THIS AGE

(The Testimony of Christ Continued.)

"WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMETH, SHALL HE FIND [THE] FAITH ON THE EARTH?"—Luke 18:8.

CHAPTER VI

The Course of the Professing Church in this Age

(The Testimony of Christ Continued.)

At the close of the twenty-third chapter of Matthew's Gospel our Lord dispensationally sets aside the Jew. He says:

"Behold your house is left unto you desolate."

He declares that they shall not see Him again till with repentant voice they acclaim Him at His Second Coming as the triumphant King. He says:

"For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Matthew 23:38, 39.

Having thus set the people aside nationally and dispensationally, He is seen, in the opening verses of the twenty-fourth chapter, going out of the temple and, therefore, officially setting it aside as the center of the divine manifestation among men. In response to the attention which His disciples draw to the great stones with which the temple is built, He declares the time is coming when not one of these stones shall be left standing upon another. When He is come to the Mount of Olives and is set down, His followers upon whom His words have fallen with solemn effect come to Him privately and ask Him three questions:

1. When the temple would be destroyed?
2. What would be the sign of His Coming?
3. When would be the end of the world?

He answers them in a discourse which fills the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters.

In the twenty-fourth chapter He sketches some characteristics which will obtain in the world and in Israel previous to the appearing in glory; then in the twenty-fifth chapter He takes up the professing church and gives a picture of its attitude and character till He comes again.

He presents this picture in the parable of the Ten Virgins.

Ten virgins took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. Five of them were wise and five of them were foolish. The foolish took no extra supply of oil with them. The wise not only took their lamps but vessels of oil besides. The Bridegroom tarried. They all fell asleep. At midnight the cry was suddenly made that the Bridegroom was coming; all awoke and trimmed their lamps. Then the foolish came to the wise and said: "Our lamps are going out, give us of your oil." But the wise replied that they had oil only for themselves and exhorted the foolish and unprepared virgins to go buy a fresh supply for their darkening lamps. The latter accepted the exhortation and went to buy; but while they were gone the Bridegroom came and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage and the door was shut. Afterwards the other virgins came and called on the Lord to open the door. He did not; on the contrary, from within that fast closed door He answered: *"I know you not!"*

In the second epistle to the Corinthians the Apostle writes:

"I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." 2 Corinthians 11:2.

The assembly at Corinth is thus set forth by the figure of a virgin. But what is written to Corinth is written to "*all* that in *every place* call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." 1 Corinthians 1:2.

The virgin then stands according to Pauline, and inspired, declaration, as the symbol or figure of the assembly of Christ. Ten is the number of testimony. We have the ten commandments, the ten spies and the tenth day in which the lamb was set aside as a witness to the mind and purpose of God in respect to the passover; the ten virgins, therefore, indicate the profession of Christ in this age. The circumstances, action, and condition of the virgins give in outline the history of this profession till Christ returns.

We have here:

1. The going forth of the light bearers in the night as the fitting expression of the function of the church, as the true relationship to Him who is the "Light of the world," and who has said: "Let your light so shine"; for, "ye are the light of the world"; and meets the apostolic injunction as recorded in his letter to the Philippians: "Shine ye as lights in the world." Philippians 2:15.

2. The going forth of the virgins to meet the Bridegroom is a dramatic testimony to the true character and relation of the church in this age as an espoused virgin, not yet a wife, as betrothed, not yet married.

3. The waiting for the Bridegroom while He tarried is a witness to the original attitude of the Church in relation to the Coming of the Lord as commended by the Apostle in his epistle to the model church of the New Testament, to whom he writes:

"Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and

true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven." 1 Thessalonians 1:10.

4. The virgins falling asleep through the tarrying of the Bridegroom and the ceasing altogether to watch for Him, is the yielding up of the church to the feelings and impulses of nature, the giving up of the Coming of the Lord as a present, an imminent hope.

5. The midnight cry: "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," the taking up again of the apostolic testimony, the revival in the church of the doctrine of the Lord's return.

6. The demonstration that some of the virgins had a supply of oil for their lamps, and that others had none, is the revelation that in the professing church of Christ as it passes through time, will be found those who make a profession, but have no supply of oil, no possession of the Holy Spirit to reinforce that profession; and that, therefore, in the church there are the two classes, the professors and possessors, and those who are simply professors and not possessors. Of course, the essential difference between the wise and foolish here in this matter of oil is the supply for the light, as that which sustains it. The oil in Scripture is used as a symbol of the Spirit, just as the lamp is the symbol of the Word. The lamp may be used spasmodically *with the oil which belongs to it,* which fills its measure; but the lamp will continue to burn when taken up and held in human hands, in the same human hands, for any length of time, only as it is constantly supplied with oil; in other words, *the lamp bearer must be also an oil bearer.* The Word of God may be held aloft in the measure of its own power to give light at the first, because there is always a sufficient supply of the Spirit for the awakening, quickening and enlighten-

ing of the individual, but the hand which holds it will find that divine instrument failing to give light unless there is in the body of the lampbearer the indwelling Spirit, continually reinforcing and making to shine the letter of the word. This is an hour of the profession of Christ, but to be of avail it must also for the individual be an hour of the possession of Christ.

7. The going in of the wise into the "place prepared," and the leaving the foolish in ignorance of the fact that the Bridegoom had come, is a witness that at the Coming of the Lord some will be taken and others left.

8. The declaration of the Lord from within the marriage chamber to the foolish when they came, that He did not know them, is the declaration of that truth already suggested, that in the professing church there will be those who in spite of the wearing of His name will have no actual, essential, relationship to the Lord; and he who has read the parable of the wheat and tares and heard our Lord declare that the Devil would introduce his own children among the children of the kingdom, will have no difficulty in seeing in this separation of the wise and foolish virgins, and the Lord's denial of the latter, that they constitute, in type, those who are not of Christ but Satan.

9. The continuance of the wise and foolish virgins side by side till the moment the Bridegroom comes is the anticipative witness that the history of the church in this world would be the history of a profession made up of those who would be false as well as those who would be true, wheat and tares, children of the Kingdom and children of the Devil.

10. The midnight hour preceding the coming of the Bridegroom is the spiritual darkness of the world, and is the prophecy that up to the very moment of the Coming

of the Lord, the church as the lamp bearer, God's light in the world, will have failed to dissipate the gloom or bring the earth into the radiant glory of a universally pervading and triumphant Gospel.

In the Gospel according to Saint Luke our Lord delivers another parable concerning the professing church.

A nobleman whose authority is in dispute among men goes into a far country to receive from the hands of a supreme power a kingdom for himself—*and to return.* He calls his ten servants about him and gives to them ten pounds, bidding them to occupy till he comes again. His citizens, however, hate him and, as he departs, send a message after him saying: "We will not have this man to reign over us."

He receives the kingdom in a far country from the hand of power and returns. At his return, he summons his servants before him, those to whom he had given the money, and enters into an examination of the business they have carried on in his name during his absence. He finds that nine have increased the pound entrusted to them in varying measure. He rewards each according to his service with a degree of rulership in the kingdom, making one ruler over ten cities, another over five. He discovers when he comes to the tenth man that this latter has hidden his pound in a napkin, has never used it. He is indignant, commands the pound to be taken from the faithless servant and given to him who has proved himself pre-eminently faithful; then he commands his enemies to be brought and slain to death before him. Luke 19: 12-27.

At this juncture it is only necessary to note one particular point in the parable, and that is, the character of service rendered by those to whom the ten pounds were

committed. The judgment seat of the Nobleman shows that this service has been imperfect; aye, that some of the servants have been called by the Nobleman, wicked.

1. This Nobleman, of course, is the Son of God.

2. His return from the "far country" is the return of the Lord from heaven; it is his Second Coming.

3. The inspection and judgment of the work of the servants is the judgment seat of Christ in respect to professed Christian service during His absence.

4. The wicked servant belongs to the category of those who shall be ashamed before Him at His Coming; who shall not receive an abundant entrance into the kingdom; who shall lose their crown and be shut out from participation in "the joy of the Lord," even His rule and glory on the earth.

All this is an added evidence that at the Coming of our Lord He will not find a faithful, a perfect, a triumphant and millennial-producing church.

From a consideration of the parabolic declarations of the Lord, turn to some of His direct and open statements. Hear what He says in His discourse upon the Mount of Olives as recorded in the Gospel according to Saint Matthew 24: 12.

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

The word here rendered "iniquity" is *lawlessnesses.* This lawlessness is to be multiplied as the age goes on, and because of it the love of many shall be cooled. To cool, as thus used, signifies to make cool by the blowing of a breath that is chill; it is the chill and icy breath of lawlessness breathing over the faith of Christ till its very profession shall be frozen; until the warm pulse beat of love to God, love to His Christ, and love to His cause

shall cease. And this icy breath is to strike its chill, not into a few here and there, but as it is written, among the "many."

It is a startling picture! It is the pulling aside by the divine hand, and a revealing of the state and condition of things in this world while the Lord and Master of it is away; a picture of confusion, of violence, and denial of the foundations of righteousness and, at the same time, a stunning and terrible announcement that the profession of Christ in numberless cases will fail to stand the test and fall away. Eliminating the church from the scene and owning a distinct profession of Christ in the "end" of the age, it is a witness indisputable, that upon the very threshold of the Lord's return, there is utter failure, wide spread apostasy, and nothing like a conquering profession that shall bring the world in gladsome subjugation to a rejected Messiah.

But listen to the statement to be found in the Gospel according to Saint Luke 12: 51-53.

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law."

From henceforth in the earth His personal life, His testimony and His work should be a cause, not of peace but of division and discord. From henceforth, the "house," the house of profession, that house of profession which is the outward seeming called the church, should be the center of disputatious division. In the

name of Christ, the household, the family, for whose unity He prayed, that household and that family called the church, would take sides and wage bitter battle until peace with soiled wings should take her flight, and all hope of outward union and inward unity should be gone forever.

Even if one does not turn to the historic page to lend his ear to the sounds of conflict arising from the threshold of great basilicas, or from the religious mob of crowded streets, or acrimonious utterances of opposing councils, he has in this utterance of Him who is the eternal truth, sufficient to warn him that the professing church of Christ, at no time during the absence of the Lord, would be in a position to convert the world, or bring in the millennial triumph, but would itself be the clanging note of discord, the inspiration of bitter war. The force of the testimony as to the outcome of the professing church in this age is emphasized in the remarkable statement to be found in Luke 18:8:

"When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

Our Lord had been teaching the necessity of continuance in prayer, even though the silence of Heaven, the apparent failure to respond, might appeal to the praying one to cease. To illustrate this virtue He tells the story of an unjust judge who neither feared God nor man, was seemingly immovable, but nevertheless, when a certain widow came before him and incessantly urged him to avenge her of her adversary, because of her continual coming, and because he was sure she would persistently weary him till he granted her request, at last determined to own her appeal and do according to her desire. The widow lifting up the voice of supplication, is the elect

remnant in Israel, that Israel whose Maker and Redeemer is her Husband, lifting up her voice in the hour of the Great Tribulation, in consonance with the martyrs under the fifth seal (Revelation 6:9-11).

The assurance of the Lord that He will speedily avenge His elect at His Coming, is the promise that He will deliver them as representative Israel in that day from their "adversary," that old serpent which is called the Devil and Satan.

The Greek form in which He asks the question concerning faith requires always a negative answer, for the conjunction used is ἄρα, and is the strongest possible declaration that faith will not exist at that moment; that the profession in His name, the profession once made by the church, will have passed away, will no longer be present.

Without attempting to urge here the tremendous, the marvelous, almost undesigned witness to the previous translation, or taking away of the "true" church before the moment when Israel again comes into view, we have, beyond dispute, the all-sufficient testimony that whatever may remain as a testimony in His name, has completely departed from the faith once delivered to the saints, no longer exists; that there is no longer faith in Him, either in the profession of His name or in the world at large; and that along the whole horizon there is not a single intimation that the world is being converted to an absent Lord; neither of a converted world, nor of a supplicating, earnest, faithful church to bring it about.

Such is the testimony of the Son of God concerning the professing church in the world during His absence.

Gathering up this testimony in all its parts, as we must do from time to time, that nothing be lost, we have the

clear, positive statement that at no single moment during His absence would the Gospel be universally received; that Satan would succeed in introducing into the world a false profession in the name of the Christ until the entire profession in His name would be thoroughly mixed with the false; that this profession of Christ would be turned into a shelter equally as facile for the Devil as the Son of God; and that the expansion of this professing church in the world would be due to the energy of the flesh and the subtilty of adulterated doctrine; that steadily the great system would be permeated with error and moved by forces not always divine; that the church as a light bearer would let that light grow dim; that there would be in its ranks those who had the saving grace of God, and those who, if they really possessed that grace, would become chilled and numb; that so far from causing the swords to be beaten into ploughshares and the spears into pruning hooks, the great profession itself would become the fruitful source of conflict, division and bloody war; that so far from presenting the spectacle of a house, a family, at one, the church would be as a household divided against itself; that the professing church would so utterly depart from the actual possession of faith that the Lord with all the wealth of His forbearance and grace would be unable to find it; the faith for which He would give His life; the faith in whose name He would commission the church to go forth to an unbelieving world.

Such is the testimony of Him who cannot lie, who has said concerning things of truth:

"If it were not so I would have told you."

THE COURSE OF THE PROFESSING CHURCH IN THIS AGE

(The Testimony of Saint Paul.)

"FOR THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THEY WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE."—2 Timothy 4:3.

"HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS BUT DENYING THE POWER THEREOF."—2 Timothy 3:5.

CHAPTER VII

The Course of the Professing Church in this Age

(The Testimony of St. Paul.)

In the last two chapters we examined the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning the character and condition of the professing church in this age; and although we examined parables and discourses, direct statements and isolated passages, we found no hint or intimation that He ever taught that the church would become triumphant and bring in the Millennial era of peace and righteousness during His absence; but, on the contrary, the outward profession of Christ would be conquered by the world; that so far from bringing in His triumph, it would in large measure, apparently, bring in His defeat. What do the Apostles teach?

Do they coincide with, and emphasize this testimony; or, is there a shiver of contradiction, and do they see rifts in the darkness which the Son of God never saw, and catch glimpses of the purple and gold of millennial dawns He never witnessed?

The Apostle Paul is at Miletus.

He has summoned the elders of the Ephesian church to meet him. It is a grave and profoundly important meeting. It is the last time that he will ever see them. As becoming an Apostle, as one specially inspired of God, as one through whom God speaks peculiarly to the church, and as his last utterance, he will speak soberly and faith-

fully. If along the horizon he sees the shining of triumphant to-morrows, he will indicate them, if for no other reason than that he may comfort and encourage. If the view which God shall give him of the possible future has in it the inspiration of a warm and helpful optimism, he will make it known.

And what does he make known?

Standing there on the shore with the future throwing its mingled light and shadow on his face and seeing on the background of the times the rising outline of the professing church in the world, he declares that the hour is even then at hand when false teachers will arise and wolf-like refuse to spare the flock; that in their own midst, in that very church, where for three years he had ministered as of God night and day with tear-filled eyes, working with his own hands and setting all hope of personal or material gain aside, rejecting gold and silver, living almost on the threshold of poverty and giving his whole being without stint to the enunciation of the truth of heaven—in this church, an apostolic church of Christ, there would arise leaders teaching perverse things, things contrary to the revelation which the Lord Himself had spoken by the mouth of the Apostle; that division, sects and raging controversy would break out and toss them like a wind driven ship on a tumultuous sea.

In his first epistle to the Corinthians, first chapter, tenth to thirteenth verses, he gives us a transcript of the professing church in that great city.

In verse 10, he exhorts that there shall be no divisions, or schisms; he says he hears there *are* contentions among them. The word so used is strong; it signifies that there has been a brawl, that voices have been raised in harsh jangling and conflict.

Verse 12 shows us that four sects, or denominations had actually arisen in the church in that city:

The Paulicians.

The Apollosarians.

The Kephites.

The followers of Christ.

Each of these sects had grouped themselves about men. Some around Paul, some around Apollos, others followed Peter, and there were those who controversially claimed to be the true representatives of Christ, but undoubtedly held to their distinction, not through the spirit of Christ, but through the special teaching of some leader, certainly antagonistic to Paul. Each of these sects was boasting itself against the other. There were those who said they were identified with the Christianity of Paul, those who saw Christianity as the eloquence of Apollos portrayed it, others who were convinced that Peter with his leaning to Judaism was the true exponent of the faith, and those who with wrangling and anger persisted that they were best entitled to wear the name of the Christ; so great was this controversial division in Corinth that Paul asks with a far reaching question whether indeed Christ has been divided among them; whether it is Paul who has been crucified and if, in their baptismal confession, they were baptized in the name of Paul?

In the next chapter, 3: 1-4, he continues to speak of this shameful condition. He says that the strife, the bickering, and party spirit were so multiplied and bitter, that he could not deal with them on spiritual ground at all, he could deal with them only as those who were in the flesh, and whom he calls babes, mere helpless infants, swept by emotions, sensations, and not governed by principle or truth.

Their spiritual weakness was so great that he had not given them the strong meat of advanced doctrine but had fed them on milk, the a, b, c, of the Gospel. Even now they were unable to bear what he was commissioned of God to write them.

There are those who look upon the sects, and denominational divisions in the church, as a sort of a God-send, as a healthy sign, a satisfactory recognition of, and a legitimate ministration to, the different characteristics and temperaments in the Christian life; that the denominations are a logical and divinely inspired blessing, a perfect and fitting instrumentality with which to meet universally varying conditions in the humanity of the church, and to fulfill the obligation of the whole truth, each denomination being foreordained to take up some particular side of truth, and emphasize it, where under ordinary and general circumstances, it would be unobserved or neglected; that, in short, the differing denominations are like the divisions in an army; they have their distinct corps and division badges; they occupy different positions along the line, and have distinct and special work; they all march, in spite of their varying formations, under the great commander, and when the battle for the right is over will rendezvous in the city of God and take part in the great review before the one eternal King who loves and will reward them all.

Such sentiments are always more or less popular, and as an argument for denominational distinctions and Scriptural support of them, are supposed to be invulnerable.

But over against all this concept the Apostle Paul places his own inspired testimony. He declares that so far from these divisions being an indication of health or

upward movement in the spiritual life, they are an infallible witness of carnality and unspirituality. He asks:

"For whereas there is among you envying, strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" 3:3, 4.

Calling oneself by the name of a leader, and standing for party, for sect, for denominationalism, according to Paul, is a sign, not of spirituality, but of the most intense carnality; so that, instead of speaking of such as walking in Christ, he speaks of them walking "as men," that is, "in the flesh."

And this was the character and condition of the professing church at Corinth, the church which Paul had planted with his own hand. And looking forward to that hour when the Christ of God shall come to sum up the work of the church in this age, the Apostle finds that at the judgment seat where all Christian work will come into review, not only will there be those in the Christian church who shall receive a reward, and others who shall suffer loss, finding no reward, but that there will be a material built into the professing church described as wood, hay and stubble, the wood, hay and stubble of mere profession whose only end is to be burned in the fire. It is the terrific declaration that at the close of this dispensation when the Lord comes, the professing church will be great in bulk, but insignificant in value, lacking in the jewelry fit for the King's diadem, but abounding in the stubble fit only for destruction; lacking in the gold, silver and precious stones fit for the King's palace, and of quality endurable, but abounding in that which never enters a king's palace, and is of quality inflammable. Not only

so; but that among those who are saved, there will be such whose salvation is as by fire, *through* fire. Just as Lot for the sake of another was brought out of Sodom even while sparks of the seething fire were falling, and carried with him the smell of the smoke upon his garments, leaving behind him the ashes of his fruitless labor, so will there be Christians who, being saved alone for the sake of the covenant faithfulness of God and His pledge to "Another" that all who should confess His name should be saved, will come forth from the blazing hour of that approaching judgment with the smell of the smoke upon their garments of glory, if not the scorch of fire upon their immortal bodies. In other words, like Lot, there will be Christians saved because, *they are burned out.*

Certainly, neither the sketch of denominational controversy as seen in the opening chapter, nor yet the horoscope of the professing church and its imperfect service as revealed in the light of the judgment seat of Christ, gives any intimation of a church advancing along high and spiritual lines to the final triumph of the Gospel and the subjugation of the rebel world. In the eleventh chapter from the 17th to the 22d verse, the Apostle again refers to the matter of divisions. He says he has heard that when they come together there is the controversy of sects among them. He finds that they have so far lost sight of the spiritual and doctrinal intent of the Lord's Supper, that they have turned it into a *common meal,* into a feast to satisfy bodily hunger; that there is not only the expression of natural hunger, but rudeness and bad manners in the very act of eating it; that some had so completely departed from the purpose of that table that they had turned it into an occasion of

drunkenness. This of itself is a confirmation of all the Apostle says touching the carnality of the sectarians.

But turn to the fourteenth chapter and twenty-sixth verse and we shall see the manner and way in which the meetings for testimony were carried on; that is to say, the degree of harmony and spiritual power manifested among them. "When ye come together," says the Apostle, "every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation."

Here is confusion, discord, not peace and order.

And how did the Apostle himself, he to whom the Lord had made special revelation, how did he stand in this apostolic church? The answer may be found in 2 Corinthians 12:15: "The more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."

Standing there in the name of an absent Lord, the channel of the divine communication, giving his life and substance in unselfish devotion to them daily, refusing to take any compensation from them lest they might charge him with being mercenary, this church turns upon him, forces him to be an apologist for his own character and office, and does this because of his faithfulness to them before God. He declares that among them are debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults.

What words are these! what force they have when fully examined!

Debates! The word signifies wranglings, and suggests the idea, not of calm and orderly discussion, but hard and bitter speech, epithets, brawling.

Envyings! Jealousy! the word comes from a verb which signifies to boil, to be hot. It is the description of spirits in ferment, one violently opposed to the other.

Wraths! The word means to rush! It gives us the picture of persons rushing about in a tumult of anger.

Strifes! The contentions of party spirit and party hate.

Backbitings! Detractions.

Whisperings! The whisper that calumniates, that suggests evil of another.

Tumults! The spirit of mobbery and riot.

Into this church the Apostle hesitates to come, lest he shall find among the members those who have been guilty of uncleanness, fornication, lasciviousness; and worst of all! that they had never even dreamed of repenting their evil, but, rather, had turned sin as a sweet morsel under their tongue. Can a more frightful picture be given of a state of morals? and this, let it be remembered, in a religious body, and that body an apostolic church? Is it possible in view of such a picture to deny the corruption of the professing church, or that the tares had been introduced among the wheat at Corinth?

At the beginning, the power and presence of the Spirit were so manifest in the church in Jerusalem that the slightest infringement of the truth brought down swift judgment from God. So intense and real was this presence that the unregenerate did not dare to enter or assume the rôle of the Christly profession; as it is written:

"And of the rest durst no man join himself unto them." Acts 5:13.

"*Joining the church*" had not at that time come into vogue; souls were "joined to the Lord"; and he that was joined to the Lord was "one spirit."

But the barrier had been broken down here, broken down to such a degree, that not only had the false and

corrupt entered in, but even the children of the kingdom had fallen away.

He who reads this story engraved faithfully by the Spirit of God will find little indication or hope that the church of the future would become purer and stronger, the farther it traveled away from apostolic care and nurture, or that such a church could possibly have within it the seeds of millennial conquest and triumph ready to burst into a harvest and victory before the Lord's return.

Recognizing these conditions as obtaining in the hour of full apostolic ministry, even the most optimistic enthusiast would hardly anticipate an improvement in proportion as the distance from such a beginning was increased.

Let us now turn to Paul's letter to the Galatians.

A careful reading of this letter will show that judaizing teachers had come in and insisted that the Gentile converts who had never known the law of Moses, to whom it had never been given, should be put under it and the ceremonial obligations which it included. They demanded that the Gentiles should be circumcised, keep sabbath days, feast days and new moons; they had gone so far as to demand that Titus, being a Greek, should be circumcised.

Paul places on record the fact that he had been forced to take Peter to account for his double dealing, standing for grace, as he did, at Antioch, and for law, at Jerusalem. In keen and flashing language he declares that this *mixed Gospel of law and grace is not God's Gospel at all,* and in terrible words he puts an anathema on those who preach or defend it, saying that such should be accursed when the Lord comes. He takes the Galatians to task for having begun in the Spirit, and now seeking to make themselves perfect in the flesh. He insists that they

are "bewitched," and that this "persuasion," this legalism, does not come from any teaching of his, nor from God; that it is like *leaven,* that it is leavening and corrupting the whole lump; then he says:

"I stand in doubt of you." Galatians 4:20.

Is there any evidence here that this church, under the benefit of Apostolic presidency, was moving forward along lines that would conduct to Millennial triumph?

In the Ephesian church the Apostle tells us there were some who had been guilty of theft; that bitterness, wrath, anger and clamor, evil speaking and malice had been rife. Ephesians 4:28, 31.

But listen to the testimony which he gives concerning the church at Philippi. He says:

"All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." Philippians 2:21.

In the third chapter, verses 18, 19, he writes:

"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."

Here, indeed, is a startling condition of things in a professed church of Christ, *enemies of the cross of Christ!* Facing the world in order to conquer it with this cross, the church finds that its enemies have not only not been overthrown, but have obtained an entering place, a shelter in the church itself, and are so at home, so secure, and in such perfect fellowship with a multitude within, that an Apostle again and again speaking of the scandal and the shame, finds his speech so ineffective, his helplessness so great, that he is led to tears. Even the church at Thessalonica, the model church of the New Testament, had in it

those who walked disorderly and were busybodies. 2 Thessalonians 3:11.

We now pass to the general epistle written to Timothy, Paul's son in the faith. Here, if anywhere, we shall find the outlines of the professing church, both as to present and to future; for, in these letters, the Apostle is writing to an apostolic delegate, a brother minister in the truth.

At the outset he asserts that some have "swerved," have become teachers of false doctrine; that some have made "shipwreck of faith," among whom he notes two by name, Hymeneus and Alexander; then in the fourth chapter he tells Timothy what may be expected in the church if the Lord should tarry. He writes:

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall *depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (demons); speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats,* which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." 1 Timothy 4:1-3.

As though the Spirit foresaw there would be failure to read the coincident signs of the times aright, He speaks "expressly"; that is, in selected, particularly chosen, and emphatic words concerning the to-morrow of the professing church, if the Lord in His wisdom should see fit to withhold His Coming.

Thus the Spirit of God speaking through Paul foresees:

1. A *departure* from the faith, an apostasy.

2. *Seducing spirits,* "wandering" spirits; by means of these wandering spirits the church will be filled with the doctrine of demons; there will be everywhere the spread

of "spiritism," the endeavor to communicate with the dead.

3. There will be lying and hypocrisy in the church.

4. Professed Christians will have their conscience "seared," cauterized as with a hot iron.

5. The marriage institution will be assailed.

6. The doctrine of fasts will be introduced.

Two doctrines are clearly and prophetically outlined in this forecast:

1. Celibacy.

2. Asceticism.

One general word expresses the horoscope:

Apostasy! desertion! revolt against the faith once delivered to the saints.

In the fifth chapter the Apostle declares that some "are already turned aside after Satan." Verse 15.

In his second epistle to Timothy he draws attention to false teachers in the midst of the church. They have been stirring up discussion and vain and profane babblings; their speech and their doctrine are like a canker in the assembly, eating into the heart of faith and leading to ungodliness. He mentions two of these teachers specially, Hymeneus and Philetus, who had been teaching that *the* resurrection, that is the *first,* was already past; and overthrew the faith of some. 2 Timothy 2:16-18.

He compares the professing church to a "great house" in which there are vessels of dishonor as well as honor, and declares that in order to be a true servant used of God in this great house of profession, it will be necessary to separate oneself, not so much from the world, as from those professing Christians who are vessels of dishonor.

Because of the foolish and unlearned questions which

are rising on every side he cautions the young preacher to be continually on his guard. 2 Timothy 2:20, 23.

In the third chapter he gives a revelation of the possible course of the age and the professing church in it.

The Christian profession will become a mere formalism; there will enter into the church those who shall have "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof"; as the power of all true godliness is in the Holy Ghost, these professors will have an outward decency that is of the flesh but not the Spirit. There will be those among church members who shall be, "lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

These men will be not only members of the church, but they will be the leaders; they will insinuate themselves into the social life, "creep into houses" and lead captive the "silly women" whose only concept of usefulness in the church of Christ is the round of butterfly fashion and social entertainment by which they will expect to hold the restless elements of the church together. Although God shall put His restraining hand upon these teachers and their folly shall be made manifest as was the folly and helplessness of Jannes and Jambres who withstood Moses with their demon inspired imitations of God's work, yet others will take their place and create such a sentiment against "spirituality" that all who will endeavor to "live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," while *"evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."* Verse 13.

In the fourth chapter the Apostle declares that the time will come, not only when those who profess Christ will not fulfill the doctrine in their life, but who will refuse to tolerate sound doctrine at all; filled with their fleshly lusts and the determination of their own worldliness, they will seek teachers of a like mind who will preach and teach to suit them. They will have "itching" ears. The expression really signifies ears that like to be tickled, ears that have an itching for pleasurable excitement, ears that are listening for what is agreeable always. The qualifying word "sound" used for "doctrine" is "uncorrupted." The meaning is that the time would come when Christians would not accept any doctrine that was not corrupted or adulterated; that they would seek those preachers and teachers who could tickle their ears with pleasant and agreeable doctrines; being lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, they would want the sermon to continue on the Lord's day the excitement, the amusement, and the fleshly interests of the week. The evil work would deepen; yielding to such influence and invoking such "instruction," the people would turn away from the Word of God, and being turned from that, would be turned to fables and myths, to the inspiration, reasoning, and poor wisdom of men. They would be more interested in a story coming from the imagination of man, seasoned with the spice of human genius, than in the revelation of a God enforced by the breath of the Holy Ghost. In passing, the Apostle speaks of defection on the one side and hindrance on the other. Demas had deserted him because he loved this present evil world, and, Alexander, the coppersmith, had withstood his preaching. 2 Timothy 4:10, 14, 15.

In writing to Titus he draws attention to the "many

unruly and vain talkers . . . who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." Titus 1:10-14.

There are those, he says, in the church, who "profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Verse 16.

In his epistle to the Hebrews he takes occasion to show that those Christians had degenerated from the day of their profession and become such as "have need of milk, and not strong meat." Hebrews 5:12.

In the tenth chapter and twenty-fifth verse of the same epistle he gives a bit of church history, showing that in apostolic times the sin of "absenteeism" had become painfully marked; that the manner of some was "to forsake the assembling of themselves together."

Such, in sum, is the testimony of the Apostle Paul to the course and character of the professing church in this world.

Gathering together what he has said, his teaching makes manifest that the church would be broken up into sects, schisms, factious denominations and parties; that it would become great in natural bulk but of little weight in divine values. False doctrine would pervade. There would be general apostasy. Filled with formalism and refusing to endure sound doctrine, the church would give preference and honor to the teacher who should tickle their ears and amuse them, until, at last, instead of remaining the depositary of the truth, the church would become the center for the preaching and teaching of the fables and myths of human invention, the analyses, the criticisms and denial of the revelation of God.

THE COURSE OF THE PROFESSING CHURCH IN THIS AGE

(The Testimony of the Apostles Peter, James, Jude, John.)

"THERE SHALL COME IN THE LAST DAYS SCOFFERS * * * SAYING, WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING?"—2 Peter 3:3-4.

"THERE ARE CERTAIN MEN CREPT IN UNAWARES * * * TURNING THE GRACE OF OUR GOD INTO LASCIVIOUSNESS, AND DENYING THE ONLY LORD GOD, AND OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."—Jude 4.

"MANY DECEIVERS ARE ENTERED INTO THE WORLD, WHO CONFESS NOT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS COME [IS COMING] IN THE FLESH."—John 2:7.

CHAPTER VIII

The Course of the Professing Church in this Age

(The Testimony of the Apostles Peter, James, Jude, John.)

In the second chapter of his epistle, verse 2, the Apostle James asserts that the "brethren" have *not* the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; that they are "partial," and have "despised the poor." He declares that they ask and receive not (chapter 4) because they ask "amiss"; that they may consume it upon their lusts.

He addresses certain ones who profess the name of Christ, but who repudiate separation from the world and calls them "adulterers and adulteresses," assuring them that the "friendship of the world is enmity with God." He speaks of "sinners" in the midst who need to "cleanse" their hands and "who rejoice in their boastings."

The Apostle Peter in his general epistle writes that in the coming days there will be:

1. False teachers in the midst.
2. The introduction of damnable heresies.
3. The truth of God shall be defamed.
4. Many shall be led astray. 2 Peter 2:1, 2.

There will be those,

1. Who have eyes full of adultery.
2. Who cannot cease from sin.
3. Who will forsake the right way.
4. Who will go astray.

5. Who will love the wages of unrighteousness.
6. Who will speak great, swelling words of vanity.
7. They will allure through the lusts of the flesh.
8. They will promise liberty and themselves be the slaves of corruption.
9. They will not be the *sheep* of Christ, but the *dogs* that turn to their vomit, and the *sows* that wallow in the mire. 2 Peter 2: 14-22.

In the last days there will be:

1. Lustful scoffers.
2. These scoffers will mock and make light of the Lord's return. 2 Peter 3: 3, 4.

The latter outline is the prophecy that the church which was called to walk in separation from the world and in daily denial of the way of the flesh, will, like the mustard seed, ground itself more and more into the region of that which is earth, more and more yield to the demands of the world and the desires of the flesh, resenting and resisting with bitterness the doctrine that He who is the Head and Master of all should even think of coming back. Just as a faithless wife, content with the joys and pleasures procured from another in the absence of her husband, would resent and resist any attempt to awaken and arouse her to the fact and the hope that her own husband might return, so the church, filled with the lust of earth and the pride of flesh, content with this world and the progress in it, would refuse all teaching or any suggestion that might lead her to look and hope for the Coming of the Lord.

Saint John announces that there would arise those who should deny the Incarnation. He writes:

"Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ ***is come in the flesh,*** is not of God; and this is that spirit of

Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." 1 John 4:3.

In his second epistle the Apostle testifies that many deceivers are entered into the world, whose special effort it is to deny *Jesus Christ coming in the flesh.* Verse 7.

In 1 John 4:3, there is a denial that Jesus Christ *has come—in the flesh.* The word is εληλυθότα; this is the accusative, singular, masculine participle and second perfect from ἔρχομαι, to come, *having come.* The denial, therefore, is a denial of the Incarnation.

In 2 John 7, there is a denial that Jesus Christ is *coming again* in the flesh.

Here the word is ἐρχόμενον; this is the present participle from ἔρχομαι and should read, *is coming.* The denial in this case, therefore, is a denial of the Second Coming of our Lord.

In his third epistle he opens still further the page of church history in his own times and puts on record that, called Apostle as he was, he had been refused admission into an assembly of Christ because of a Diotrephes who loved to have the pre-eminence. This man had exalted himself in the church, denied the Apostle, "prated" against him with malicious words, refused the fellowship of many Christians and excommunicated others.

Saint Jude writes a short epistle. It contains but twenty-five verses, but these are crowded with import.

The fourth verse is pregnant with meaning:

"For there are certain men *crept in unawares* . . . ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

1. Certain men crept in unawares, coming in silently, not attracting attention! How like an echo of the parable

of the wheat and tares; where the tares were secretly introduced while men slept.

2. Ungodly men turning the grace of God into lasciviousness; continuing in sin because God is dealing in grace; giving liberty and license to the flesh on the professed ground that all sins of the flesh have been anticipatively answered for in the death of the cross. Ungodly men. Children of the Devil; again a restatement and a fulfillment of the parable of the tares.

3. Denying the only Lord God, even our Lord Jesus Christ. Rejecting the deity of the Son! False doctrine! leaven working in the church; leavening the lump. These men are:

1. Filthy dreamers.
2. They defile the flesh.
3. They despise dominion.
4. They speak evil of dignities.
5. They are spots in the feast of Christian love.
6. They are clouds without water.
7. They are trees with withered fruit, twice dead and plucked up by the roots.
8. They are raging waves of the sea.
9. They foam out their own shame.
10. They are wandering stars going into blackness of darkness forever.

Jude quotes Saint Peter and thus sustains him. He says, verses 17, 18:

"But beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be *mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.* [See 2 Peter 3:3.] These be they who separate themselves, sensual, *having not the Spirit.*"

The motto of Saint Jude is clearly and distinctly:

"Remember the words which were spoken before."

Remember that the church would be filled with ungodly men, mockers, those who walked after their own lusts, false teachers, turning every liberty of grace into an occasion for sin and so filling the church with falsehood in doctrine and shame in practice that it would be necessary earnestly to "contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Verse 3.

With one accord the five Apostles testify that the profession of Christ in this age will become corrupt and depart from the faith.

Nowhere do they even intimate that the church will arise and cast out the unclean, exalt the testimony of God, lift up a standard against the wicked, overcome sin and lawlessness, and at last bruising Satan, bind him, and then hand up the kingdom full of praise to a coming King.

THE COURSE OF THE PROFESSING CHURCH IN THIS AGE

(The Specific Testimony of Saint John.)

"I SAW A WOMAN SIT UPON A SCARLET-COLORED BEAST * * * DRUNKEN WITH THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS OF JESUS."—Revelation 17:3-6.

"SHE SAITH IN HER HEART, I SIT A QUEEN AND AM NO WIDOW * * *"

"SHE SHALL BE UTTERLY BURNED WITH FIRE."—Revelation 18:7, 8.

CHAPTER IX

The Course of the Professing Church in this Age

(The Specific Testimony of Saint John.)

Saint John was one of the "three mighties" who walked with the Lord in the days of His flesh; he was with Him in the Mount, he lay in His bosom and, above all others, has received the distinctive title as "that disciple whom the Lord loved."

It was fitting that the man who had leaned upon the breast of God's Son and heard the inmost beating of His heart, should become the final depositary of His most intimate thought in respect to the course of the church in this age.

And such is the case.

To him the Lord has given a picture of church development in principle and detail while He is away.

This picture is to be found in the book of the Revelation; and that book opens with the suggestive declaration:

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John."

Not only this, but the risen and ascended Lord actually descends in a vision of glory to the lonely isle of Patmos, and there meeting His startled disciple, gives him a communication concerning the church, command-

ing him to write it in the form of seven epistles to seven churches in Asia: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

The number "seven" is characteristic of this book.

In it we have the "seven spirits," the "seven stars," the "seven candlesticks," the "seven overcomers," the "seven promises," the "seven seals," the "seven angels," the "seven trumpets," the "seven thunders," the "seven vials," the "seven heads," the "seven mountains," the "seven kings," and the "seven plagues."

The seventh day was the day of God's rest in creation, the declaration that His work was complete. The children of Israel encompassed Jericho seven times and blew seven blasts on the last round as a witness that the encircling judgment was complete. Seven was used as the symbol and limit of forgiveness. The seven spirits set forth the unity of the Spirit in the universality and completeness of His administration. The seven seals will be found upon investigation to cover the whole series of judgments with which the Lord shall usher in His kingdom.

Seven is, therefore, the number proclaiming unity and completeness.

By so much, the seven churches of Asia give us in seven distinct and yet relative parts, the complete story of the whole professing church in this age.

The record of the epistles to these seven churches is given in the second and third chapters.

Let us examine the epistle to the Ephesians. Revelation 2: 1-7.

In this epistle the Lord first commends the church. They have tried those who say they are apostles and are not. He knows their works, and labor and patience.

They hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which He also hates. Nevertheless He has somewhat against them because they have left their first love.

Thus this epistle teaches:

1. At the very outset of her history the church would depart from love to Christ.

2. False teachers would enter.

3. A class of teachers would arise whom the Lord styled "Nicolaitanes." This word signifies, when analyzed, those who gain the victory, or, exalt themselves over the people; a class of persons who would exalt themselves above the "laity." Teachers and leaders who would be guilty of the very thing against which the Apostle Peter warns in the fifth chapter, third verse of his first general epistle, wherein he says:

"Neither being *lords over* God's heritage."

The epistle to Smyrna, verses 8-11.

The Lord recalls the poverty of the church, the blasphemy of those who *say* they are *Jews* and are *not, but are* of the synagogue of the *Devil,* warns them against tribulation and exhorts to be faithful unto death.

This epistle teaches:

1. That false professors would be introduced into the church (wheat and tares again).

2. These false professors would be of the Devil. (The Devil sowed the tares.)

3. They would form an assembly inside the church. (The mustard tree giving shelter to the birds of the air.) A corrupted Christianity giving shelter to the Devil as well as the Son of God.

This epistle to Pergamos, verses 12-17.

This church dwells where Satan's seat is (that is, in the world; for he is the prince and god of this world).

While there are those who still hold fast the name of the Lord, there are others who hold the doctrine of Baalim and the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.

This epistle teaches:

1. The church would become identified with that world against which she was called of the Lord to testify. Instead of dwelling in "heavenly places in Christ Jesus," she would find her dwelling place in the world which slew her Lord. Instead of resisting the temptation of the Devil as her Lord had done in the Mount when He refused the rulership of the world at the hands of the Devil, she would take her place in that world, and yielding to his temptation accept the vision of rulership while her Lord was away. Instead of waiting in patient singleness of heart as the betrothed for a coming Bridegroom, she would listen to the disguised voice of the tempter and become the world's paramour, the world's mistress.

2. The professing church would hold the doctrine of Baalim.

Baalim taught Balak to induce the children of Israel to marry their sons to the daughters of Midian. This was the union of the representative people of God with the people of the world.

It is not necessary to go to history. Turn over its pages and read how Constantine, emperor of Rome, out of considerations of state, made Christianity the official religion of his empire. It is not necessary to read the lines which tell how at the point of the spear he forced whole nations in a day into the communion of the church. It is not necessary to read Eusebius, the early church historian, to catch his enthusiastic conviction that the holy kingdom of Heaven had come and that the kingdoms of this world had become kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, the

armies of the earth now supporting the church and bearing it onward to the full conquest of the world. It is not necessary to read any of these things to know the mind and will of God and the certainty of His forecast. However valuable history may be as a secondary verification of the Word, the great facts which history confesses are all prophetically proclaimed: that the church and the world would be married together, would form an adulterous union in which the church would be kept and supported by the world.

The very etymology of the word *Pergamos* contains the prophecy, the word *gamos,* signifying a marriage!

3. Time would come when the professing church would hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.

Those who would exalt themselves over the "laity," claiming an authority and power not given of the Lord, man-made distinctions and offices.

Archdeacons, Priests, Archbishops, Monsignors, Prelates, Popes! What are all these; and what is the classification of them which sounds continually in our ears? "Clergy." "Laity." These are offices with which the pages of Holy Scripture are unfamiliar; none of these can be found within the list of gifts which the ascended Lord gave to His church for its edification and guidance during His absence. These are human inventions, and each man who fills such a so-called office in the church of Christ has exalted himself, or been exalted, over the people. If this is not the Nicolaitanism of the epistle to the Ephesians and to Pergamos, where is there certitude of definition in any word? All this exaltation of men into human inspired offices in the church of Jesus Christ is known by the familiar term, "*clerisy.*" And so sure as the clerisy of the church is an invention of the flesh

and not the Spirit, and those who are in these offices are called again and again the "princes" of the church, and are thus in the place of victory, rule, domination and lordship over the people; as all this fulfills to the very letter the thing for which the word Nicolaitane stands, then Nicolaitanism is nothing less than "Clerisy."

And let it be remembered as we pass along that Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord, says:

"Which thing I hate." Revelation 2: 15.

The epistle to Thyatira. Revelation 2: 18-29.

In this church the woman Jezebel has become the leader and mistress. She is the mother of children. She calls herself a teacher. She seduces the Lord's servants and teaches them to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.

Jezebel was the pagan wife of Ahab, king of Israel.

By the union of Ahab and Jezebel the professed people of God became *paganized, idolatrous.*

This epistle then teaches:

1. The professing church of Christ would become paganized.

There would come into the world a *paganized Christianity.*

2. This paganized Christianity would set up idols, images, and offer up many sacrifices.

3. That this paganized, idolatrous church, having "daughters," would be a "Mother"; being identified with holy things, she would be a "Holy Mother"; and representing the church of Christ at that epoch she would be a "Holy Mother Church."

4. As Jezebel the representative of Paganism married to Ahab, the representative of Israel and inclusively of Judaism, was the union of Paganism and Judaism, so the

symbolic Jezebel is a prophecy that the professing church would be a composite union of Paganism and Judaism.

5. This paganized and judaized church would teach those who professed to be the ministers of Christ to commit fornication; fornication in symbolic language is the union of the people of God with the world. This church, therefore, would send her ministers forth to advocate the official union of the church and the world, the world supporting and carrying the church, temporal sovereignty.

It is also suggestive that the Apostle Paul foretells a time coming in the church when the marriage institution would be assailed and celibacy taught and practised by a class.

Celibacy as taught and practised is, as all history shows, an open door to unchastity.

6. That as this pagan woman bringing the support of a pagan world to the professed people of God set herself up for an authoritative teacher, and changed the laws and customs in Israel, so this judaized, paganized, world subsidized church, would set itself up to be the originator of doctrine, the supreme teacher, changing laws and customs to suit the convenience of her own concepts.

He who reads history knows that this is just what happened.

The church becoming the mistress of the Roman world, adopted the paganism of that Rome where she now reigned supreme. If she approved Paganism on the one side, she accepted Judaism on the other.

She took pagan temples and turned them into her basilicas. She took pagan gods and consecrated them as Christian saints. She set up the colossal image of Jupiter and hailed it as the image of the Jew-Peter. She laid

hands on the candle and wafer of paganism and incorporated them in her service. She brought in the altar of paganism and set it up in place of the simple table of the Lord. She took the bell and mitre of Judaism and set up the Levitical priesthood instead of the common, spiritual priesthood of all believers. She took the high-priesthood or the Aaronic family and in its name set up the supreme priesthood of a pope, the head of a special and authoritative family in the church. She took the many and oft-repeated sacrifices of Israel which could never take away sins, and substituted them for the one accomplished and perfect sacrifice of the cross. Instead of the Lord's Supper, the Breaking of Bread, she set up the mass, and at every service offered up the Son of God afresh.

The plain ministry of Christ, and the local officers of the church, deacons, elders and bishops, became a body of self-exalted prelates, priests, princes and lords, greater than kings or potentates, bidding emperors hold the stirrups of their richly caparisoned mules, or stand as cupbearers at their more than royal feasts. Clothed in purple and fine linen every day, these prelates, these so-called "princes of the church," in the name of "Holy Mother Church," commanded the world to support them.

Thus history reveals that Rome stood for,

Clerisy.

Judaism.

Temporal sovereignty.

Paganism.

An examination of the epistles to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos and Thyatira will show that,

In *Ephesus* we have *Clerisy.* Nicolaitanism.

In *Smyrna, Judaism.* "Those who say they are Jews and are not."

In *Pergamos, Temporal Sovereignty.* Dwelling "where Satan's seat is."

In *Thyatira, Paganism.* "That woman Jezebel."

And all this fulfilled in the name of Romanism.

A Romanism that debauched the church and debauched the world, even as the filthy Jezebel debauched Israel and Israel's king.

All this I say is history!

But you need not go to history.

Go to Rome itself.

Go into the church of Rome.

At once, you are face to face with images, idols, the mass, the often offered sacrifice, "works" instead of faith, the bell, the wafer, the priest, the prelate, thrones for ecclesiastical lords and princes, celibacy, clerisy; a church that originates doctrine; now, the doctrine of the immaculate conception, anon, the doctrine of papal infallibility; a church that changes times, laws and seasons.

Look at all this and then go back and read the letters, the epistles to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, and while you shiver at the outlines which Romanism has revealed, magnify in these epistles the unfailing foreview of an ascended Christ, and the accuracy and inerrancy of the written Word which bears that forecast forth to you.

The epistle to Sardis. Revelation 3: 1-6.

This church has a name to live and is dead. She is exhorted to strengthen the things that remain and are ready to die, and is told in unmeasured terms that her works are not approved of the Lord, are not perfect, that is to say, *complete* before God.

Sardis, etymologically, signifies, "the escaping ones," those who come out.

The epistle teaches:

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1. There would be those who should come out from that with which they had been previously identified.

2. These religious outcomers would take to themselves a special name; so that it might be said of them: "Thou hast a name." That is, the name was their claim and testimony.

3. These outcomers would stand for life, necessarily, for *spiritual* life. "Thou livest."

4. In spite of the name and profession, this outcoming church would be dead. They would be dead while alive. Thou livest and art dead. "To be alive and yet dead," signifies to be alive in the flesh and dead as to the spirit, spiritually dead.

The time would come, therefore, when a portion of the professing church of Christ would have a great name, a name in which it founded special claim for distinction, and yet, would be spiritually dead.

5. Although the work it would begin by coming out would be a good work, looked upon with favor by the Lord as "before God," that work would not be completed and the Lord would withdraw His favor.

If we take up history we find that,

1. There came a crisis in Romanism.

There were those who escaped out of it and repudiated all identification with it. They "came out."

2. Those who came out of Rome took to themselves a pre-eminent name. They called themselves "*Protestants,*" and their movement was known as "*Protestantism.*"

3. The Protestant church professed to stand particularly for spiritual life.

4. In spite of its name and profession, Protestantism

became spiritually dead; for long desert years there was not even a mission.

5. Although the Reformation began well and threatened to sweep Romanism to the sea, winning seemingly the favor and overwatching providence of the Lord, it came, nevertheless, to a sudden and mysterious halt, failing to complete its work in the very countries where it began.

6. Some of the "things which remain" in Protestantism "are ready to die," and the exhortation to Sardis to be "watchful and strengthen" them was never more pertinent and appropriate than now.

The forecast of Sardis and the history of Protestantism fit each other like hand and glove.

With the page of history closed and the facts of Protestantism ignored, the prophecy remains as the declaration of the continued failure and departure of the professing church.

The epistle to Philadelphia. Revelation 3:7-14.

Philadelphia is Brotherly-love.

The Lord addresses this church in His capacity of the One who has the key of David, opening and shutting at His own will.

He knows the works of this church.

He has set before it an open door and no one can shut it.

This church has kept His Word and has not denied His name.

It has also kept the Word of His patience, and because of it, He promises to keep those in Philadelphia out of the hour of the great Tribulation. In this epistle we have the prophecy that after Sardis there would be in the

professing church those who would own the common brotherhood of the Sons of God.

There would be those who, unlike Sardis standing for a party name, would exalt the name of the Lord; that they would keep His Word, the word of the Gospel; but, specially, they would keep the Word of His Patience. His Patience is that He is patiently waiting the promise of Psalm 110: 1, when the Father shall make His enemies His footstool and according to the second Psalm, send Him back to rule and reign on this earth. Keeping the Word of His Patience is preaching the truth of the Second Coming and patiently with Him waiting for it.

This epistle is an announcement that in the midst of the steady departure from the truth, here and there throughout professing Christendom, there would be a return to the faith once delivered to the saints, a revival of the blessed hope of the Coming; but this in itself would be only like the brief rent in the dark cloud.

Thus this epistle teaches:

1. That towards the end of the Church age there would be a revival of the doctrine of the Second Coming. This period agrees with that described in the parable of the virgins (Matthew 25), where at midnight the cry is made, "Behold! the Bridegroom cometh!"

2. A time of terrible Tribulation is coming on the earth.

3. The "true" church, the church that "keeps" the word of His Patience will be taken away before the hour of that unspeakable trial.

4. The faithful "waiting" ones will be few enough to call for commendation on the part of the Lord.

The epistle to Laodicea. Revelation 3: 14-21.

This is the seventh and last church.

Its *character.*

It is rich, increased in goods and needs nothing.

It is lukewarm.

According to the Lord it is actually wretched, miserable, blind, poor and naked.

He testifies that He will spue it out of His mouth.

The *time.*

It is evening, the close of the day. Evening! Supper time.

The attitude of the Lord.

He stands outside and is forced to knock in order to gain attention.

The church within is so taken up with other things beside Himself that He is forced to make this demonstration that they may know that He is still the Lord of the church, still dealing with it.

The church is feasting within.

The Lord standing outside.

He is standing outside, but willing to enter within and hold fellowship with any individual or as many individuals as will have Him.

The teaching of this epistle is startling but clear.

1. The last letter and evening time set forth that it is the closing hour of the " Day " of grace.

2. The last church addressed, the last characteristic of the professing church in this age.

That at the close of this dispensation the professing church would be outwardly rich in " goods," in real estate, in buildings, in appointments, in numbers, and all that goes to make up " religious goods."

4. Testimony for Christ would be lukewarm, diluted; a little of Christianity, a little of the world. Enough of Christianity to make the worldling in the church decent

and respected; enough of the world to satisfy and delight the professed Christian; a Christianity that stood for nothing in particular in Christianity, and a Christianity that stood for everything in particular in the world.

5. Blind to the Truth.

6. Spiritually poor and naked; the lack of spiritual life as clearly manifested as the body of a person who stood on the highway without any clothing, perfectly nude. Professing Christians as shamelessly naked of spiritual life in their daily experience as the wanton woman who, professing virtue, entices to debauchery by exposing her person.

7. The church taken up with the pleasures, the "supper" of its own providing; according to Saint Paul in his epistle to Timothy, seeking "pleasurable excitements." "Lovers of pleasure more than God."

8. This lukewarmness of the church would make the Lord sick; it would produce the same effect upon Him that lukewarm, tepid, water does upon the ordinary stomach, it would cause Him to spue. He would spue out professing Christendom and totally reject it, even as He had rejected Judaism from being His witness on the earth.

9. At the end of the age He would stand entirely outside of the professing church.

He would no longer fellowship it as a whole.

He would enter in and fellowship only where there was a response to Himself.

Gathering up the distinctive outlines of this seven-fold picture of the professing church we learn that:

1. The church would depart from love and devotion to a personal and absent Lord.

2. There would be the coming in of false teachers.

3. There would be the introduction of those who would constitute the "synagogue of Satan" in the very heart of the church.

4. The professing church would become an equal shelter with the Lord for the Devil and his agents.

5. The coming in of Judaism and earthly tabernacles instead of grace and heavenly priesthood.

The ritualism of the Levitical priesthood instead of the Melchizedek simplicity.

6. The church and the world uniting to form a religio-political kingdom on the earth.

The church no longer holding the attitude of the chaste spouse who awaits the caresses of her returning Lord, but rather of the faithless wife who takes advantage of her husband's absence to become the paramour and mistress of another.

7. The church would become paganized, and thus compounded of Judaism, civil rule and Paganism, would assume to herself the right and title of "the Mother church," setting up idols, multiplying the sacrifices, and debauching her servants both doctrinally and morally.

8. There would come the escape of some from this unclean and harlot church, making a great protest and standing partisan-like for its name of Protestantism, but falling short in its work and becoming spiritually dead; having a name to live and yet dead.

9. Then there would come a revival here and there in the midst of the professing church, the Protesting side of it, a revival of the old Apostolic doctrine that the Coming of the Lord was drawing nigh.

10. Professing Christendom would at the last be both rich and poor. Rich in "goods," poor in spiritual life and doctrinally blind.

Becoming, finally, so diluted, so weak in the truth and in every fibre of spiritual responsibility; so occupied with the flesh and the things of the flesh; so little taken up with the Spirit and the things of the Spirit; so utterly unconscious of the withdrawal of the Lord's presence from the assemblies that, in sadness and in indignation, the Lord would revolt against its hypocrisy, and repudiate it as His church.

Through the closing testimony two tremendous pictures are thrown on the background of the age:

1. Romanism marching to the religious conquest of the world.

2. Protestanism repudiated of the Lord.

We turn now to the seventeenth chapter.

We behold a woman sitting on a scarlet colored beast.

She is dressed in scarlet, decked with pearls and holding in her hand a golden cup filled with abominations and filthiness.

She is called *Mystery Babylon.*

The ten horns on the wild beast which bear her, are explained in verse 16 to be ten kings who receive their power " one hour," or at " the same time " with the Beast.

This Beast is the blasphemous son of Satan, the son of Perdition, the Man of Sin, the Antichrist; and these ten kings form his government.

This woman is therefore supported by the kingdom of Antichrist, the kingdom of the Devil.

In the last verse the woman is called a city.

The Church of Christ is called a *Mystery.*

She is presented as a virgin.

She is called a Bride.

Finally, she is presented as a city, the new Jerusalem, the city of peace and order divine.

This scarlet clad woman is called a *Mystery.*

She is not a virgin, she is a harlot.

She is not a wife, she is the paramour and mistress of the Devil's son.

Finally, she is that great city which is called Babylon, the city of confusion and the denial of the divine peace and order.

If the first woman, being a symbol of the church, is thus a symbol of a religious system, then surely this other woman stands equally for a religious system.

If the first woman stands for the true, the second must stand for a false.

In the eighteenth chapter there are certain evidential and moral characteristics which make this view of the latter a demonstration.

We read:

" Babylon is become the habitation of devils (demons) and the hold of every foul spirit and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Revelation 18: 1, 2.

1. *The habitation of devils.*

Paul in his epistle to Timothy had warned that there would be a departure from the faith, the church giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons.

2. *The hold of every foul spirit.*

The Apostle in the same epistle to Timothy declares that the time would come when there would be foul, " seducing " spirits in the church.

3. *A cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*

In the parable of the Mustard tree our Lord had foretold that the professing church would become the shelter of the birds, those birds which in the parable of the Sower He had defined as the Wicked one and his agents.

If there is any unity in language at all, then in this

woman filled with abominations, drunken with the blood of martyrs and supported by the state, by armed force and authority, we have a picture of the professing church in its final development after our Lord had spued it out of His mouth.

In Revelation 18:4, there are evidently some who are of the elect of Christ, and who bear His name, mixed up in some fashion with this abomination; and these are exhorted to come out of her.

There is no doubt that this eighteenth chapter gives rather the civil than the religious side of the vast system called Babylon in the last days; there can be no doubt that Babylon is a historic future, a real city and system, but the religious side, whether the centralization of it be Westward or Eastward, is here set out in principle.

Going back to the sixteenth verse, we find that the very kings, the very powers that support and uphold her, at last turn on her and destroy her. Who can fittingly describe the ignominy?

The professing church spued out and rejected of the Lord, in the end rejected and destroyed by the Devil.

No lower depths could be found.

And this is the final picture of the professing church in this world!

With the Apostle John the testimony concerning the course of the professing church during this age is at an end.

We have examined the testimony of our Lord and the five Apostles.

They all agree.

There is not a dissenting voice.

There is not a contradicting word.

Our Lord shows that the church would begin with

unwatchfulness, be invaded by Satan and end by becoming his dwelling place.

That so far from overcoming the world, the world would overcome the church, chilling its pulses of love and devotion.

The Apostle Paul warns the church of coming heresies, divisions and great apostasies; of a formalism which denies the power of God, rejection of doctrine and the exaltation of that ministry which, denying the truth, will seek only to entertain, to please.

James declares that the church will commit adultery with the world.

Peter testifies that the church will be filled with ungodly men who will deny the Coming of the Lord.

Jude says that so great will be the departure from the faith that it will be necessary to contend for it earnestly.

John, the beloved disciple, assures us that one of the marked characteristics in the closing hours of the dispensation will be the bold, unblushing denial of the Incarnation and the Second Coming in the flesh; and now in this special story specially inspired by the risen Lord and coming, as has been said, as a post-mortem testimony, Saint John declares that the church, beginning indeed with unwatchfulness, going on to coldness and indifference, becoming the dwelling place of Satan and reversing the testimony of God, making herself under the symbol of the woman the head instead of the Man, will at the last be rejected by the Lord, rejected with loathing and scorn, and that thus rejected its development will be terrific until it is seen like the lump completely leavened, permeated through and through with corruption, the habitation of devils, the hold of every foul and unclean spirit, the cage of every hateful bird, and finally repudiated, not only of

God, but of the Devil, given over to destruction until, as a system, it is stamped out and, as a material organization, burned with fire.

At what moment in the history of such a profession can we find hope that it will bring in the Millennial era before our Lord's return?

Warned by our Lord's declaration that the Gospel would have but a partial reception; and seeing that the church would be invaded by the world, the flesh and the Devil, and that a diluted Gospel would be the successful factor in its world wide expansion; that it would be filled with unbelief, carnality and sin of the worst form; and that many of the pages of its history would be written in the bloody ink of the martyrs of Jesus, and made blind by Satanic inspiration and demoniacal wickedness; seeing and knowing these things, how could we expect that such a church would at the last win the world for Christ, and lifting its silver trumpets cry, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ"?

The amazement is that any intelligent reading of the testimony could have led one for a moment to believe a Millennium even thinkable.

Having seen the course of the professing *church* in the world, we shall now proceed to examine the faithful witnesses and hear what they have to say concerning the course and character of the *world* in this age.

What will be the development of the world morally and governmentally?

What will be the outcome of human society as now constituted at that moment when the Lord returns to inspect it?

THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD

(The Testimony of Christ.)

"INIQUITY SHALL ABOUND."—Matthew 24:12.

"NATION SHALL RISE AGAINST NATION."—Matthew 24:7.

"MEN'S HEARTS FAILING THEM FOR FEAR, AND FOR LOOKING AFTER THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE COMING ON THE EARTH."—Luke 21:26.

CHAPTER X

The Course of this World

(Testimony of Christ.)

What will be the character and development of this world, this human society, during the absence of our Lord?

Will it, in spite of much that is false and impure in the professing church, respond to that which is pure and divine within it? Will it own the truth of the holiness of God's Son, His resurrection from the dead, receive the righteousness and life which He offers, and day by day show the moulding, shaping influences of these truths in kindred manners, in withdrawal from the ways of sin, till steadily it turns its back on war, on murder, rapine and lust? Will the guns in the armories and the cannon in the forts grow rusty with non-use? Will the prisons have fewer occupants and judges less and less an occupation in rebuking wrong and establishing the right? Will the growth of human power and the increase of knowledge be so guided and controlled by the church of Christ that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters the face of the deep, each succeeding century like the waves of the sea breaking higher and with a nobler uplift on the shores of time? Will the flashing of the message, the speeding of the trains, the gliding of the ships, the whirling of the wheels in busy factories, the spreading broadcast of all the sounds and utterances of the earth in daily published news, be the reflexive accent of the Christ? Will rapid transit and sanitary plumbing and asphalt pavements be the italics in a writing that

testifies to the regeneration of the human heart and the triumph of the Gospel of the Son of God? Will the world grow surely better and better towards the perfect day? Will the times ripen like apples in the sun, until filled with all the sweetness of Gospel dew and light they shall swing outward as from heavy laden boughs of deeply fruited trees to be plucked in all their fulness and beauty by the hand of the coming King? the glad millennial fruit of the professing church of Christ?

We ask our Lord and He replies:

He replies in Matthew 10: 16-22:

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

"But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

"And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

"And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.

"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."

According to this statement of the Christ the world will act towards professed followers like a pack of fierce, bloodthirsty wolves. It will spring at the throat of righteousness and truth. It will hate and persecute and kill, seeking utterly to destroy the Holy Name. In whatever age, under whatever form of manifestation, the spirit of the world in relation to the way and work of Christ will be the spirit of the wolf, the wild beast that seeks to kill.

Our Lord makes further answer in respect to the world's attitude in the parable of the Sower.

Leaving out of sight the ratio of the Gospel, He declares that to the end this Gospel will be resisted by the world, the flesh and the Devil; that to the end the factors and regulators of the world will be, not the Gospel, but the Flesh and the Devil.

He answers in the parable of the wheat and the tares.

In that parable a remarkable fact is revealed, the fact of *continued mixture;* up to the end of the harvest the field is a *mixed field;* it is a field divided between wheat and tares.

This is a reaffirmation of the parable of the Sower that the whole world would not receive the Gospel.

The world is a *mixed world,* a divided world, a world divided between those who are the children of the kingdom and those who are the children of the Devil.

Whatever advance the world may make then in science or natural morals, or refinement, according to these two parables it will not submit to the Gospel; it will hate and resist it, and hate and resist it with the wild beast, wolf-like spirit to the last.

He answers in the parable of the Drag-net. Matthew 13:47-50:

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

"Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

"So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from the just;

"And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Let us halt, and remembering that these statements are "headquarter statements," ask ourselves what gleam of millennial light and hope is here?

But let us pass on to three striking verses in this most striking chapter. Verses 37-39.

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

"For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

"And knew not, until the flood came, and took them all away: so shall the coming of the Son of man be."

If it were simply to tell us that the ordinary occupations of life would be going on when our Lord should return, it were little need to go so far away as the days of Noah for an illustration; but the flood is a judgment on the character of the world that preceded it; and as the flood is a type or symbol of the Coming of the Lord, then, indisputably, the character of the world at that hour is a prophecy of the character of the world previously to the Coming of the Lord.

What then was the character of the antediluvian world?

The thunderous fall of the deluge, the breaking up of the great deep ought to be answer enough.

The wiping out of all but eight persons ought to tell in language sufficiently plain that unspeakable condition.

But we are not left to any conjecture.

The record is given to us in the oldest of books, in Genesis 6:5, 6:

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented

the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

The intents, the purposes and the desires of man's heart were wicked.

His wickedness consisted in the fact that he was wholly given up to the material side of his life, to his natural and animal functions, and did not care to retain God in his heart.

Our Lord declares that this will be in principle and practice the moral condition of the world previous to His Coming.

But turn back for a moment to verses 29, 30:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man, in heaven; and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Here is a description of the Second Coming by the Lord Himself.

When does He say He will come?

Immediately after the Tribulation.

The Tribulation described in verse 21.

Surely this tribulation could not be the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus, the Roman emperor.

It could not, because the Lord Jesus did not appear in the clouds of heaven with all His holy angels *immediately* after.

He has not appeared in the clouds of heaven with all His holy angels up to this time.

As He is to appear immediately after the tribula-

tion, the tribulation must *immediately precede His Coming.*

Immediately preceding His Coming there is to be what?

Not a thousand years of Gospel triumph closing amid the purple and the gold of millennial splendor! No!

What then?

A tribulation such as the world has never seen.

Our Lord is coming a second time.

He is coming (so He says Himself) immediately after the most marked and noted event of its kind in the world's history.

What is that notable event?

The conversion of the world and the handing over of that converted world at the close of a millennium of peace, prosperity and righteousness, to the Lord?

No!

What then?

He, Himself, answers.

After a tribulation unparalleled in human history.

Note too the attitude of the people of the earth previous to this glorious Coming.

Is it the attitude of those who have been dwelling in a kingdom of righteousness and peace; the attitude of those who are yearning for the manifestation of the king?

Listen to His own answer.

"THEN SHALL ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH MOURN."

Instead of joy, there is sorrow and anguish in the earth.

The sound of His Coming, instead of filling the hearts of men with delight and their lips with praise, breaks on their ears like the roar of a deluge. And if the deluge be a symbol of the Coming, then this Coming is, itself, not the descent of a king who expects to receive the plaudits

of a welcoming people, but the revelation of a Judge who comes to execute vengeance on a guilty and rebellious people.

In the parable of the Virgins, Matthew 25, our Lord again in simple words lays bare the course and character of this age just previous to His Coming. v. 6.

" At *midnight* there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh."

The hour of the world just preceding His Coming is MIDNIGHT.

Not MIDNOON, but MIDNIGHT.

Not the high noon of spiritual light and splendor, of millennial triumph, but midnight, the moment of the day's deepest darkness; hence, a declaration that this day, this dispensation, the time while our Lord is away will move on to deeper, blacker spiritual night.

Look at the statement in all its simplicity.

Before the Bridegroom comes, just before He comes, the time will be MIDNIGHT, not MILLENNIUM.

In the closing portion of this chapter, in Matthew 25: 31-46, the Coming of the Lord is described.

" When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory;

And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats;

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was

thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty and gave thee drink?

When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked and clothed thee?

Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Our Lord here represents Himself coming, not as the Bridegroom, but as the Son of man. He comes not to a marriage, but to a judgment. He finds gathered before

Him, not a united, but a divided world: a world divided between sheep and goats; between those who are His and have been such in covenant purpose from the "beginning," and those who are not His and never were; those who shall enter into the kingdom, and those who shall enter into the furnace of fire.

The whole picture is a terrific and scenic demonstration that when He comes, the Lord will not find a world wholly submitted to His will.

Let us take up the same divine testimony in the Gospel according to Saint Luke 17: 28-30.

"Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

We know what Sodom was.

We use its name to-day as an indication of all that is abominable and vile in man; and our Lord singles out Sodom under the fire of judgment, judgment because of its filth and wickedness, coupling this fiery judgment with the Coming of Christ, not as a Bridegroom, but the Son of man. If this descent of fire upon the ancient city is a judgment upon the condition morally existing, and this judgment is specifically declared by our Lord Jesus Christ to be a representation of His Second Coming, what other possible conclusion is there than that this Coming has to do with the moral condition of the world then existing.

It will be a time of surrender to the flesh, a time of eat-

ing and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building.

In spite of all the centuries; in face of all the Gospel; in the light or shadow of the church of Christ, the world will still persist in living its animal and fleshly life, moving forward with jocund and careless step, not to the benediction of a welcomed Lord and Saviour, but to the fiery wrath of an indignant Judge.

Where is the genius who can out of such statements as these weave the pleasing thought of a coming millennium?

How is it possible through the black clouds of the deluge, the fire and smoke of the brimstone above Sodom and Gomorrah, to see the crystal heavens and the sinless earth of the millennial hour?

The parable of the Nobleman in Luke 19, has already been studied from the standpoint of the professing church. In brief statement it reveals the attitude of the world at the Coming of our Lord.

When the Nobleman went away his citizens sent a message after him, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us," v. 14; for they "hated" him. When he comes back he deals first with his own servants, then takes up the issue raised by his citizens; and what does he call them? "Enemies." He says: "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." v. 27.

Not a ray of millennial light breaks across the parable.

Let us now examine the discourse in Luke 21: 25-35.

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking

after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.

Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth."

In the previous verses our Lord has been speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the Jewish nation and the reannunciation of Gentile times; He then passes from that to the greater Tribulation and the mightier judgment at His Coming. We have therefore in these immediate verses a delineation of the course and character of the world at the moment of His return.

Note what is herein declared.

1. That there will be great disturbance in the heavens.

2. There will be distress of nations.
3. There will be universal perplexity.
4. Great tidal waves of the sea.
5. Men's hearts failing them.
6. All pervading fear.

What *could* the Son of God have said in stronger form if He wished to deny a millennial era during His absence?

Shattering heavens! shivering earth! moaning sea! perplexed minds! frightened hearts! distress! pressure and *heart failure!*

Think of it! it is startling! He says the world previous to His Coming will be in a state of UNIVERSAL HEART FAILURE.

Was there ever a more generic and tonic phrase than that?

HEART FAILURE!

Men giving it up! hopeless! in despair! just waiting for the end to come!

"As a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." v. 35.

A snare!

What language is this?

How does it accord with millennial expectations?

What utter contradiction of millennial premise and conclusion; for, indeed, if during a thousand years of peace all hearts have been filled with the knowledge of the Lord, then all hearts ought to be in the joyful anticipation of His personal Coming; to say that this Coming will take these people like a snare, a trap, in which you catch wild beasts, is to deny in the most emphatic terms any delight or joy in God at all.

Think of it! the Coming of the Lord compared to a trap.

Think of it! the world compared to a wild beast caught in a trap!

Thus the *antemortem* testimony of our Lord is all in.

From first to last there has been unity and consistency in it. He teaches:

The *attitude* of the world to the Gospel while He is away.

It will be *resistance,* resistance in the energy of the flesh and the subtilty of the Devil.

He teaches *the moral character of the world* during His absence.

It will be a world given over to materialism, to sin; a world that will repeat in accentuated form the days of Noah and the days of Lot; a world in which there will be deep, black spiritual midnight; a world filled with tares; a world filled with goats rather than sheep; a world filled with His enemies, with the haters of His name and righteousness.

He teaches the condition of the world *socially* and *governmentally.*

It will be a time of distress.

Men will be hard pressed by conditions and circumstances.

The nations and the governments of the earth will be in commotion and filled with perplexity.

All nations will be moved to their foundations.

War and not peace will be the prevailing characteristic.

The whole fabric of society will be interwoven with the threads of despair, with fear, with a general pessimistic surrender to the sense of the greatness of the odds against them.

He teaches that nature herself will be in a state of elemental war, as if all the bolts and rivets that held the

framework together had been loosened. The powers of heaven will be shaken. The earth will tremble like a jolting chariot, till the seas, breaking from their fixed confinement, shall dash on the resounding, terrified shores.

And the scene ends with the Christ rejecting world caught in a trap, caught in the trap of its own sin, mockery and unbelief, and dragged snarling and fearful before its captor and its judge.

Such is the testimony of the Son of God concerning the course of this world during His absence.

THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD

(Testimony of the Apostles.)

"THE WHOLE WORLD LIETH IN WICKEDNESS [THE WICKED ONE]."—1 John 5:19.

"I SAW THE KINGS OF THE EARTH, AND THEIR ARMIES, GATHERED TOGETHER TO MAKE WAR AGAINST HIM THAT SAT ON THE HORSE."—Revelation 19:20.

CHAPTER XI

The Course of this World

(The Testimony of the Apostles.)

In Galatians 1:4, the Apostle Paul writes that the age in which we live is "this present evil world."

In 1 Thessalonians 5:1-7, he writes:

"But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night."

In this statement, he teaches us, even in the barest analysis:

1. The Day of the Lord, the millennial day, will be introduced, not amid the effulgent splendor of a triumphant Gospel and a world filled with the light and intelligence of the Spirit, but like a stealthy, swift coming thief, into a night of darkness and spiritual sleep.

2. That this millennial day will not come with gifts

and blessings to the world but with the hand of the robber to spoil it of a treasure.

3. While everybody is talking about the coming "good times" and the days of "peace" on earth, sudden destruction shall fall upon them and they shall not escape.

And now certainly whatever else the Apostle teaches he does teach beyond peradventure:

1. That at the Coming of Christ the world will be divided among children of light and children of night; among people saved and people not saved.

2. That so far from there being a millennial era of peace at the Coming of Christ there will be a time of sorrow and anguish, with no way of escape. So far from the world being in a state of spiritual tranquillity and peace it will be as a woman caught in travail pains without warning, and without relief.

Reading that passage, would any unprejudiced mind imagine for a moment that there was any possibility of a long reign of peace before the Coming of the Lord?

But let us now turn to 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10.

"It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

And to you who are troubled, rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to

be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

The Apostle here says:

1. The Lord is coming.

2. He is coming in vengeance judgment.

3. He is coming in judgment on those who know not God.

4. He is coming in judgment on those who obey not the Gospel.

The Apostle thus clearly teaches:

That at the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ there will be two classes in the world.

Those who know not God.

Those who obey not the Gospel.

Can anything plainer be said?

Would any one reading the passage for the first time imagine for a moment that the Apostle taught or believed in a world converted and living in the light of Gospel peace a thousand years before the Christ is revealed? Does the language sound at all consistent with that other declaration that "all shall know Him from the least unto the greatest?" or that the "knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as waters the face of the deep?" In the second chapter of this epistle we have a terrible and realistic picture of that which is coming on the world before the Son of God shall appear to take unto Himself His great power and reign.

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God,

sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Remember ye not that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way.

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming;

Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders,

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

That they might all be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2: 1-12.

The Apostle here says:

1. The Day of Christ, the Millennium, had not come in his day.

2. Before the Day of Christ could come there must come a " falling away."

3. A terrible personage will arise called the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition.

4. This man will exalt himself as very God.

5. He will come in the power and energy of Satan and as his special manifestation.

6. He will do great signs and wonders.

7. He will deceive multitudes.

8. Those who have refused to believe *the* truth will believe *the* (the article is used here) lie.

9. When this Man of Sin is at the height of his impious career, the Son of God will come in glory and destroy him.

Now whatever controversy there may be concerning the full interpretation of this passage, there can be no question that the Apostle does teach:

1. That just previous to the Coming of our Lord there will be, not a millennium, but a "falling away," an apostasy.

2. When Christ comes He will find, not a whole converted world, but a man seated in the very temple of God (whatever that temple may be) claiming the attributes and honors of God.

3. He will find a world bowing down and worshiping the Devil's man, and refusing to own God's Man; yielding allegiance to *The Lie* and not to *The Truth.*

There is something almost ghastly in these things.

But there they are!

Behold the picture painted by the Spirit Himself!

A man lifted up, crowned and owned by the world as a very god; and that man, not God's Christ, God's Son, but the Devil's Christ, the Devil's son; not the outgrowth and the flowering forth of the divine life, but the blossoming into form of all that is undivine and devilish in man.

And how does the Apostle characterize the time? What is just the phrase he uses to set forth the days preceding the coming in glory?

Listen to what he says in v. 11:

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion."

The words are ἐνέργειαν πλάνης "a working of error," "an energy of falsehood."

He gave the Holy Ghost to be the energy for truth to enable men to see, know, and walk in the truth, and they refused; now He will send them the energy and power of falsehood. Instead therefore of a time when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth, it will be a time of "falling away," "strong delusion," "believing the lie."

Listen to the words of the Apostle in 2 Timothy 3: 1.

"In the last days perilous times shall come."

Is this utterance an inspiration of God?

Is it the declaration of the divine mind in divinely chosen words, on the lips of a specially called apostle?

If so, then the statement ought to be the end of all controversy, the end of all question.

"In the last days perilous times shall come."

And the word "perilous" means "trying," "torturing" days of tribulation, sorrow and anguish for all who "will live godly in Christ Jesus."

Perilous because of the atmosphere of unbelief and indifference in the professing church. Perilous because of the waxing worse of evil men and seducers. Not only perilous because of conditions in the church, but a time of peril in the world. A time of fierceness, unrest, confusion and war as already described by our Lord.

So far then from being the day when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, it will be a time of peril and tribulation, a time of sorrow and despair; and all this agrees with what the Lord taught on Olivet, that just before His return there would be a time of unparalleled tribulation.

Let us pass to the testimony of James.

Read the following words:

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten.

Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door." James 5: 1-9.

In this passage the Apostle declares:

1. That in the last days there will be the accumulation of wealth in the hand of a class called distinctively "rich men."

2. Gold and silver will be rusted; the word for "rust" is "poison" and signifies that capital in the hands of the "rich men" will become like poison in its effect; this evil

effect of money in their hands shall be a witness against them.

3. Wages will be held back by a conspiracy on the part of those who possess the capital.

4. The suffering of the wage earners will be so great that the cry of it will come up into the ears of God.

5. Those who are rich shall live wantonly, voluptuously, carelessly in the very presence of the starving poor.

6. The hoarded wealth of the capitalist will be turned as an engine of power against the poor.

7. Misery and disaster will come upon the rich.

Here is prophecy that the closing hours of this dispensation will see classes and masses arrayed against each other. Wealth and wages looking each other in the face with defiance. Violence breaking loose and scattering the heaped up treasures of the rich. A time of such provocation to those who are poor; a time of such stress and strain, such an appeal to human bitterness, that the Apostle warns the disciples of Christ not to reach forth their own hands, or make any attempt to right their wrongs, and then comforts them with the thought, not that the times under Gospel influences will mend for the better, but that the *Coming of the Lord draweth nigh,* and that He is coming as the judge to right His people's wrongs; coming not to receive the acclaim of the righteous, but to execute judgment on the unrighteous.

After the testimony of Saint James we have the witness of Saint Peter.

He says: 1 Peter 4:7, 12, that "the end of all things is at hand."

And what is to be the character of that "end"?

Not peace and millennial deliverance, but

"The fiery trial which is to try you."

Let us pass to the last chapter of his second epistle. Chapter 3: 3, 4.

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last day scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?"

This passage teaches:

1. There will be scoffers.

2. These scoffers will be lust walkers.

3. These lustful scoffers will mock at the doctrine of the Second Coming.

Thus whatever else the Apostle teaches, he does teach that when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back:

1. He will not find a converted world, a world reverencing His doctrine.

2. He will find a world in which sinners and scoffers still dwell.

He will find a mocking testimony which denies the doctrine of His return.

Saint John is the apostle of love.

If anything could inspire to optimism and hope it would be love, the love of God swelling through the soul as it swelled through his.

Hear what the beloved disciple says concerning the course of this world in the last days:

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." 1 John 2: 18.

John says:

1. Antichrist will come.

2. Already many antichrists have come.

3. The distinctive characteristic of the last time will be the coming of *The* Antichrist.

4. The distinctive characteristic of this distinctive Antichrist is the denial of the Father and the Son; and, therefore, the denial of the whole Godhead.

Language could not be more specific, either as to the character of the last days, or the all revealing sign of the Antichrist.

Listen!

The characteristic sign of the last days will be—what?

Christianity?

No! the characteristic sign of the last day will be Antichrist, *Antichristianity!* a denial and rejection of Christianity.

The characteristic sign of the Antichrist will be the denial of the Godhead as revealed in the Scriptures.

The denial of Christianity!

The denial of the God of revelation!

These are the foretold characteristics of the last times.

Foretold specially by the Holy Spirit over the lips of chosen Apostles.

By what authority do men dare to tell us in the face of these statements that there will be a millennium, a triumph of Christianity and the Bible before the Lord comes?

But let us take up the testimony of Saint Jude.

"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints,

To execute judgment upon all; and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Jude 14, 15.

Jude says when the Lord comes He will find in the earth those who are styled:

1. Ungodly.

2. Ungodly sinners.

In verse 7 he compares the moral character of the world to Sodom and Gomorrah and thus justifies our Lord's previous use of them as an illustration of the closing hours of this age.

It remains for us to examine the special testimony of the Apostle John, as set forth in the book of the Revelation.

In the opening verses of that book we get a glimpse of the attitude of the world in relation to our Lord's Coming.

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and *all* kindreds of the earth shall *wail* because of him." Revelation 1:7.

Is this the attitude of a world for a thousand years submitted to the rule and reign of the Gospel?

Evidently not!

It is the end of a guilty, God defying, Christ rejecting world.

Let us pass to the sixth chapter, vs. 15, 16.

"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Revelation 6: 15, 16.

The Apostle here says that:

1. Before Christ comes all classes of society will be filled, not with faith, but fear.

2. Multitudes will seek but one boon: TO BE HIDDEN FROM THE GAZE OF A COMING LORD.

3. Men will pray, not to the Lord, but to rocks and mountains. They will pray for rocks and mountains to fall on them.

4. They will pray one prayer: "HIDE US FROM THE FACE OF CHRIST."

Is this the attitude of a Gospel loving, Christ surrendered world?

Let us take up the testimony of the eleventh chapter.

Here we have the picture of two witnesses coming forth in the name of the Lord. A certain governmental power symbolized by "the Beast," comes up against them and slays them; all the world make merry at their death and send congratulations to each other over their downfall.

"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth." Revelation 11: 7-10.

In this scene we learn:

1. Before the Coming of Christ there will be martyrdom in His name.

2. The world will sympathize with the murderers and not with the martyrs.

Take up the twelfth chapter.

We have the picture of a war in Heaven.

Satan, the old Serpent, the Dragon, the Devil is cast out into the earth. The voices in Heaven announce woe to the inhabiters of the earth, as it is written:

"Woe! to the inhabiters of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Revelation 12:12.

The first verse of the thirteenth chapter reads:

"And I stood upon the sands of the sea."

This verse properly belongs to the last line of the twelfth chapter, and should read:

"And he stood upon the sand of the sea."

It is a picture of the Devil after his expulsion from Heaven standing on the borders of the symbolic sea, peoples, nations, and tongues in commotion, and ready to evoke from the maelstrom of political confusion his last great master-piece, his established and manifested kingdom on earth.

The thirteenth chapter gives us a picture of this evocation under the form of a monstrous beast arising out of the sea. Revelation 13:1, 2.

"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. . . . And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God.

And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the

Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Revelation 13:5-8.

Note:

1. Satan is cast out of Heaven into the earth.

2. Immediately a seven headed, ten horned beast is seen to arise and draw the attention of the whole world after it.

3. This beast, in the last analysis, is the head of some world wide kingdom. He is a man.

4. This man receives his power from the Dragon, the Devil, Satan.

We are told:

"The dragon gave him his power, and his seat [throne] and great authority." Revelation 13:2.

5. All the world worships the man who receives power and authority from the Dragon, from him who is "that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan." Whatever else may be taught here, this, at least, is taught:

1. In the closing hours of this age, just previous to the appearing of our Lord there will be a world wide kingdom, evoked and inspired by the Devil; at the head of it a man who is possessed of all the Devil's power and authority.

2. This head of a kingdom, this world ruler, will be pre-eminently the "Devil's Man."

3. The world, consciously or unconsciously, will worship the Devil in this man.

4. The closing hours of this age will show the world surrendered, not to God's Man, but to the Devil's Man.

But let us read the closing picture in this remarkable chapter.

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the

earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast: saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword and did live.

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

And that no man should buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Revelation 13: 11-17.

We learn here:

1. A false prophet will appear in the name and behalf of the Devil's Man.

2. He will lead the world to worship the Devil's Man.

3. He will do great miracles in the name of this man.

4. He will deceive those who dwell on the earth.

5. He will so deceive men, even in their very "eye-sight" that they will believe and worship the image of this man as full of life and breath.

6. All who would do business must carry the mark of

this beast, the first beast, his name, or the number of his name.

7. Those who refuse to worship the beast will be beheaded.

8. Those who attempt to maintain the name of Christ are made to suffer unto death.

9. It is a time not of peace, but war on the earth.

10. It is a time not of heaven, but of hell on the earth.

Can a more terrible picture be given?

And this is a picture of the world just at the close of this age, just before the Lord returns; a world ruled and tortured by Antichrist; a world worshiping and giving praise to the Devil's Man.

In the face of such testimony what temerity, or ignorance it requires to talk of a millennium before Christ comes.

The fourteenth chapter, in its closing verses again shows the condition of the earth just previous to the Lord's Coming.

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle,

and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." Revelation 14: 14-20.

We have here two pictures:

1. The Coming of the Son of man in the cloud of Heaven.

2. The harvest which He reaps at His Coming.

The harvest, He, Himself, has told us in Matthew 13: 39, " is the end of the world " (the age).

What is that end as seen here?

The world, not only as a harvest field where the sickle of judgment separates the " wheat from the tares," but the earth turned into the "winepress of the wrath of God," and blood! blood spurting out to the bridles of horses.

But let us turn to the sixteenth chapter.

" For they [the spirits of devils, demons] go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Revelation 16:14.

Here you have the whole world preparing for war, for some great and final battle, a battle that continues up to the moment when the Almighty Lord is revealed in His power.

In the seventeenth chapter we behold ten kings associated with the Devil's Man, giving him all their power and support, and with him organized in open battle

against the Lord at the moment of His Coming, as it is written: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour [at the same time] with the beast.

These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb." Revelation 17: 12-14.

What a picture!

A world in arms at the Coming of Christ.

In the nineteenth chapter we have a final picture of the state and condition of the world at the Coming of the Lord.

The door in Heaven opens and the Lord comes out with the army of His saints in glory.

And what does He find?

Let verse 19 answer.

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse."

That is the attitude of the world on the eve of His Coming.

"Gathered together to make war against Him."

A Christ-rejecting, Christ-defying world to the last.

The testimony concerning the course of this world during the absence of our Lord is now all in.

This testimony has been unbroken.

The world will go on in sin and folly; in spite of every advance in art or literature, or science it will steadily depart from God and His ways.

Our Lord says the condition of the world morally will be as it was in the days of Noah; as it was in the days of Lot.

Paul announces that the end of the age will be full of peril, that Antichrist will come and the whole world deceived, caught in his snare, will be carried captive of him at his will.

James says that the last days will see wealth and wages arrayed against each other; luxury on the one hand, poverty on the other; wanton enjoyment of hoarded wealth and sorrow and pain because of the lack of it; cruelty and oppression crying aloud to the God of Heaven from the lips of unpaid toil as of old from the brick kilns of Egypt.

Peter says there will be lustful materialism and mockery of the Coming of the Lord.

Jude says the world will be filled with ungodly sinners, full of hard speeches against God.

John fills the canvas with many and broadly touched pictures; each of them full of realistic situations in which the world is seen shivering with fear or shouting with blasphemy, and closes with a dramatic delineation of a world in arms against the coming King.

Such is the testimony, beginning with our Lord and ending with the disciple who leaned upon His breast.

We have sought to answer three questions.

1. What would be the ratio of the Gospel in this age?

2. What would be the history of the professing church?

3. What would be the course and development of the world?

Would the Gospel be universally received?

Would the church become the triumphant factor in the world?

Would the world permeated by the Gospel of the grace of God, yield at last, and thus the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ?

Would the great millennial era then open?

We have found these questions answered.

The Gospel would *not* be universally received.

The church would *not* become triumphant.

The world would *not* be conquered by the church.

There would be *no* Millennium before the Coming of the Lord.

The Gospel would be hindered by the World, the Flesh and the Devil until the end.

The professing church would be invaded of Satan, rejected by the Lord, " spewed " out of His mouth, and at the last rejected of the Devil himself, as the debauchee repudiates the mistress of whom he is tired.

The world would go on in increasing sin and infidelity, and flinging itself finally in open and Devil led rebellion, be found in warlike array against God and His coming Christ.

Such is the story of the Gospel, the Church and the World while the thorn crowned, crucified and repudiated Christ is away.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE KINGDOM

(The Testimony of Christ.)

"THE SON OF MAN SHALL COME IN HIS GLORY * * * THEN SHALL HE SIT UPON THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY: AND BEFORE HIM SHALL BE GATHERED ALL [THE] NATIONS * * * THEN SHALL THE KING SAY UNTO THEM ON HIS RIGHT HAND, COME * * * INHERIT THE KINGDOM."—Matthew 25:31-34.

"As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

The word translated "world" is "age" or "dispensation."

The end of the world is the end of the age, the end of this dispensation, the time of our Lord's absence.

Our Lord therefore declares:

1. This dispensation will end in judgment on those who do iniquity.

2. Angels will be the executors of the judgment.

3. The Son of God will be present as the Son of man, therefore as the judge, directing the execution of the judgments.

4. After the execution of the judgments the righteous shall shine forth as the revelation of the kingdom.

Whatever else is taught it is taught clearly:

1. That the kingdom of the Father and the Son is not introduced by the Gospel.

2. It is introduced by judgments.

3. It is introduced by judgments at the personal Coming of the Lord.

Let us turn to the parable of the drag net.

"Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat

down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just;

And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 13:47-50.

Again we have the "end of the world."

Again we have the declaration that,

1. This age ends with judgment from heaven.

2. It ends with judgment from the presence of the Lord about to appear in glory from heaven.

3. The kingdom comes in only after the execution of judgment on the world.

We now may pass to the familiar chapter: Matthew 25:31-46.

The Son of man is seen coming in glory.

He sits upon the throne of His glory.

All nations are gathered before Him.

The judgment is set.

There is a process of judgment which ends in the separation of one party, called the sheep, from another party, called the goats.

Two gates open out of this judgment process.

One gate opens into the kingdom.

The other gate opens into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.

From this we learn,

1. Christ is coming in personal glory.

2. He is coming back as a judge.

3. After the judgment He will reveal His kingdom and the rewards of it.

Let us now read Luke 17:26-30.

"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

Let us note here:

1. The judgment of the flood.

2. After the flood Noah and his family came out under a new heavens into a new earth.

Thus the Lord teaches:

1. He is coming as the flood came, that is, in judgment.

2. After He has judged the world, the saved ones, like Noah, will come forth into a new regime, a new dispensation of God.

The Lord therefore teaches that a new era of peace and security will come in the earth after His personal appearing in judgment; as the new era of peace and prosperity is the thousand years, the millennium, then He teaches in this figure that the millennium is to be introduced by judgment at His personal appearing.

As for Sodom!

Sodom represents the art and culture of the hour.

It ends in judgment from heaven.

It ends in judgment in spite of the fact that they are "buying and selling." Thus again would the Lord teach

that this age with all its culture, all its materialistic "progress," does not flower out under Gospel energy into the millennial era, but finds its fiery doom at the hands of a coming and judging Lord.

In Luke 19:27, we have a brief but significant statement:

"But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."

"And when he had thus spoken," it is added, "he went up . . . to Jerusalem." Which is the city of the "Great King," and the capital of the kingdom.

The Nobleman had been in the far country.

He had received the title deeds to the kingdom.

He comes back to establish it.

His first step is to call his servants and deal with them and reward them.

The next step is to deal with his enemies.

He deals with them in judgment and commands them to be put to death.

When the enemies have been executed his kingdom is established.

Thus we learn clearly enough:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is coming back from heaven with authority to set up His kingdom.

2. He will enter into judgment and slay His enemies.

3. After He has executed judgment on His enemies, He will personally set up the kingdom.

We turn to Luke 21:27.

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

But when? Read vs. 25, 26.

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon,

and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

The Son of man is coming then at a time of anguish and sorrow on the earth. Coming when the heavens are shaking with the evidences of His wrath; as He says:

"I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea." Haggai 2:6.

That is to say:

The kingdom and glory of Christ will be introduced and revealed, not by the preaching of the Gospel, but by His appearing in wrathful judgment on the earth.

This is the testimony of the Son of God.

From first to last He testifies that His kingdom is to be introduced by His personal Coming and associated judgments on the earth.

Nowhere in all His testimony is there the slightest hint or imagination that the Gospel would be used as the introducing factor.

The dispensation is seen closing amid the movement of the heavens, the turmoil of the earth, the going forth of angelic executors, the shining glory of a coming judge and the opening of the gates of woe.

Judgment is the thunder word that rolls along the threshold of the kingdom. The thunder voice that proclaims the beginning of the kingdom.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE KINGDOM

(The Testimony of the Apostles.)

"HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS; AND EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM; AND ALL KINDREDS OF THE EARTH SHALL WAIL BECAUSE OF HIM."—Revelation 1:7.

"AND HE LAID HOLD ON THE DRAGON, THAT OLD SERPENT, WHICH IS THE DEVIL, AND SATAN, AND BOUND HIM A THOUSAND YEARS."—Rev. 20:2.

"AND THEY LIVED AND REIGNED WITH CHRIST A THOUSAND YEARS."—Revelation 20:4.

CHAPTER XIII

The Introduction of the Kingdom

(The Testimony of the Apostles.)

In the book of Acts 15: 13-17, we have the address of the Apostle James before the first universal council of the church, held at Antioch. The Apostle says:

"Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

And to this agree the words of the prophets: as it is written,

After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."

The Apostle declares that,

1. The Lord is taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His name.

2. After He has taken out this people He will return.

3. After He returns He will set up the kingdom foretold by the prophets.

Thus we learn:

1. The kingdom will not be set up while the Lord is away.

2. It will be set up only after His return.

Therefore it is evident:

1. The kingdom is not set up by the preaching of the Gospel.

2. It is set up only by the personal appearing of the Lord.

3. As that appearing is always in connection with judgments executed on the earth, then the kingdom is set up, is introduced, only by judgment at the Coming of the Lord.

Let us now listen to Paul in 2 Thessalonians 1 : 5.

"That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God."

The Apostle thus positively states that the kingdom in his day was still future.

The verses which follow show how the kingdom is to be introduced.

"And to you who are troubled, rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power;

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." 2 Thessalonians 1 : 7-10.

Note here that,

1. The Lord is coming.
2. He is coming in flaming fire.
3. He is coming to punish.

This is not the picture of a converted world gliding with imperceptible transition into the manifested kingdom and glory of the Lord, but a world scorched and burned with the down sweeping fires of judgment, burn-

ing up and destroying the dross, that the kingdom may be revealed and the righteous shine forth without evil or sin to molest them.

In the second chapter we read that Antichrist is to come, to sit in the very temple of God, win for a time the worship of the world and then be overthrown of the Lord.

But how is he to be overthrown?

By the preaching of the Gospel and the gradual dissemination of the truth till the hearts of men are enthroned of God?

Hear what is written:

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

The following verses show that previous to that appearing in glory the Lord sends the judgment of "strong delusion" on the unbelieving and Christ rejecting world, as it is written:

"God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a [the] lie." v. 11.

The world has been unwilling to receive the Truth, the Christ of God who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He sends strong delusion upon them, so that when Antichrist is revealed they may be deceived by him and fall down before him, owning the lie as the truth.

Thus the whole atmosphere is one of moral and hardening judgment.

The Coming of the Lord is the climax and the accentuation of judgment.

The Devil's Man is overthrown and the kingdom brought in by judgment, and nothing but judgment.

In his epistle to Timothy, the Apostle clearly indicates that the world is to be convinced of the truth of Christ and His sole right to reign as supreme King, by His personal appearing.

"Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." 1 Timothy 6: 13, 14.

Thus he says:

1. The Lord will appear.

2. His appearing will bring in His "times," His hour, His day.

3. He will "shew"; that is, "prove," that He is the only true King and Lord supreme.

4. His proving Himself as such is in contrast to other kings and lords who dispute His authority; as it is written: "I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him." Revelation 19:19.

5. His "shewing" Himself against the kings of the earth is in the way, necessarily, of judgment; and thus His Coming, is a coming in judgment.

The final testimony of the Apostle Paul may be found in Hebrews 12: 25-29.

"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escape not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

Whose voice then shook the earth; but now hath he promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing

of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

For our God is a consuming fire."

The Apostle is here quoting from the prophet Haggai 2:6, 7.

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once more . . . and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;

And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house [the temple at Jerusalem] with glory, saith the Lord of hosts."

From this we learn:

1. The Lord will shake the heavens and the earth.

2. He will shake them as the God of Sinai, the God who is a "consuming fire," the God who is law and judgment.

3. He will shake the heavens and the earth that every thing which is not of Him may be overthrown; hence, the "shaking" is a manifestation of judgment.

4. After the shaking or in connection with it, He will come to His temple at Jerusalem.

5. He will come to set up the "kingdom which cannot be moved."

From this it is evident:

1. That the "kingdom which cannot be moved," is not set up by the preaching of the Gospel.

2. It is set up by the Coming of the Lord as the Shaker of the heavens and the earth and as "consuming fire."

3. It is set up in the midst of an action shattering the earth that the "wicked might be shaken out of it." Job 38:13.

Such a shaking is judgment pure and simple.

Thus Paul's last word is that the kingdom is introduced not by the preaching of the Gospel, but by the Coming of the Lord in Judgment.

From the Apostle Paul we pass to the testimony of the conservative Apostle James.

"The coming of the Lord draweth nigh . . . the Judge standeth before the door." James 5:8, 9.

The analysis is self-evident

1. The Lord is coming.

2. He is coming as a Judge.

An examination of the preceding verses will make the force of the statement all the more significant.

These verses describe a time of desperate trouble; of conflict between classes. There are those among Christians whose wages are kept back; who feel incensed at the cupidity and cruelty of those who by means of their wealth tyrannize over the poor, treat them unjustly and make them suffer; they are tempted to take matters in their own hands and right their wrongs. The Apostle exhorts to calmness. He declares that the evil is monstrous enough to cry aloud to heaven for adjustment; that in fact the cry has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and that the Coming of this Lord draweth nigh; yea, He is even "before the door," and is there as the Judge, coming to right the wrong Himself

Let us hear what Jude says.

He quotes from Enoch, the seventh from Adam:

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thou*sands of his* saints,

To execute judgment."

Thus Jude agrees that the kingdom is to be introduced by judgment at the Coming of the Lord.

And now, as we have done before, let us pass to the special testimony of the Apostle John, in the book of the Revelation.

We will take up the sixth chapter.

But in order to appreciate its force we must take our standpoint in the fifth chapter.

The fifth chapter represents a scene in Heaven.

The Lord Jesus is shown in the court of glory as a Lamb that had once been slain. He is identified by the titles which are given him as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David.

A book is held in the right hand of the majesty on high, in the hand of Him who sitteth on the throne of the universe.

The book is written on both sides, rolled up and sealed with seven seals. No one has been able to open the book or even to look upon it, and John, who has been watching the transcendent scene, has been moved to tears because no one has been able to take the book and break the seals; but presently, the Lord Jesus comes to the great throne-sitter and takes the book out of His hand.

Immediately all heaven breaks forth into song, and the voices cry:

"Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." Revelation 5:9, 10.

Not only does heaven sing but voices from the earth join in the great acclamation.

It is a song of triumph, proclaiming that the hour of the rule, the reign and glory of the King, is at hand; that the kingdom so long promised is about to be made manifest in power on the earth.

This book has to do with the kingdom.

Such a book was written, subscribed, sealed and rolled when Jeremiah purchased a plot of ground in Anathoth of Hanameel, the son of Shallum, his uncle. He says:

"And I bought the field of Hanameel, my uncle's son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver.

And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances.

So I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open.

And I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison." Jeremiah 32:9-12.

It was a book similar to the seven sealed book taken by the Lord Jesus from the hand of the throne-sitter.

It is the "*evidence of purchase.*"

It is the "*book of the purchase.*"

Listen again to the song in heaven:

"Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Revelation 5:9.

"Redeemed!" that signifies a redemption by "purchase."

He could take the book because He was the Purchaser.

The book was the evidence of His purchase, the book of His purchase.

As the Heaven singers announce that He has purchased them by His blood; that He has made them a "kingdom, priests," and that they will reign on the earth as the result of His taking and opening the book, then, evidently, the book being the evidence of His purchase, is *the title deed to His kingdom.* At this point it is well to recall the parable of the nobleman who went into a far country to receive a kingdom for himself and return.

He went into that country to receive from the hand of authority, the right and title to a kingdom in dispute.

He went into that far country to get the title deed to the kingdom, and thence to return with it and set up the kingdom in his own name.

That Nobleman is our Lord Jesus Christ without controversy.

The far country is Heaven.

He went thither after His rejection on earth that He might obtain the right and title from the Father's hand concerning His disputed kingdom, and once possessed of that title to return and set up the kingdom.

In this Heavenly scene then we behold the fulfillment of this parable. We see the Lord Jesus as one who had been rejected and crucified of men, but whose blood of the cross became the crimson coin of the kingdom's purchase, going up the court of Heaven, and before all witnesses, taking out of the hand of power the right and title to the kingdom.

The breaking of the seals is the solemn and judicial way in which He will announce His right to rule and reign; and this breaking of the seals will be the declaration that He is *about* to set up the kingdom long prom-

ised to Him, and which He has earned by the purchase of His blood.

The opening of the seals takes place in the sixth chapter.

This sixth chapter might be called therefore, "The Breaking of the Seals; or, A Treatise on How the Kingdom is to be Introduced."

Let us read the story of the breaking of the seals.

Our Lord opens the first seal and we read:

"And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."

A military chieftain ready to lead men to battle and death.

Our Lord opens the second seal and we read:

"And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword." v. 4.

1. Peace taken from the earth.
2. Men engaged in killing one another.
3. The sword, not the Gospel, the arbiter among the nations.

He opens the third seal and we read:

"And I beheld, and, lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." vs. 5, 6.

1. Carefulness on behalf of bread-stuffs.
2. Carefulness with the wine and the oil.
3. Scarceness of provisions; famine.

He opens the fourth seal and we read:

"And I looked and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." v. 8.

Ezekiel 14:21 is an anticipative annotation upon this verse:

"For thus saith the Lord God, How much more when I send my four sore *judgments* upon Jerusalem, the *sword,* and the *famine,* and the noisome *beast,* and the *pestilence.*"

The fourth horse therefore gives the interpretation of this vision of the horses. They are:

War.

Famine.

Pestilence.

The scourge of the wild beast.

And these are said to be direct judgments from the hand of the Lord.

"I send my four sore judgments."

It is the Lord Himself who, breaking these seals, sends these judgments on the earth.

These judgments come with trampling hoofs like wild, fierce coursers guided by a master hand.

There is one phrase that leaps out from the midst of the dust of these thundering steeds of judgment:

"*Peace taken from the earth.*"

Here you have a picture of the Lord with the title deed of the kingdom in His hand, about to set up His kingdom in the earth and rule and reign the thousand years of peace.

And how does He inaugurate His kingdom?

How does He set it up?

He does so by sending war, famine, pestilence and the noisome beast.

He does so by taking peace from the earth.

He opens the sixth seal and we read:

"And, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;

For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

All nature is in commotion.

The populations of the earth are in fear and anguish.

All cry out that they may be hidden from the face of the coming Lamb.

And what is the character of that face which begins to look out from this framework of shivering heavens and shattering earth?

It is the face of a lamb, and as the word signifies, "a little lamb," but *a lamb's face filled with wrath.* v. 16.

Not as that face looked out from beneath its gory

crown on a cross of wood, pale, pitiful, all forgiving, but a face filled with the flame of indignation; indignation and wrath kindled through twenty centuries of long suffering and despised forbearance.

And all the crowd are crying out that "His" day is come.

And not one in all that trembling, fear tortured crowd has any doubt as to the character of that day.

They know that it is the day of the kingdom, the day of the thousand years, the day of the oft described millennium.

They have no doubt now as to how it will be introduced and what it will mean to them.

Listen to the cry that rings round the supersensitive world from almost palsied lips:

"THE GREAT DAY OF HIS WRATH IS COME; AND WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO STAND?"

Yes! He is coming!

He is coming to set up His kingdom.

Coming in wrath to establish it in wrath.

Coming with the leaping steeds of judgment drawing His chariot of fire, and thundering down the bursting heavens to the quivering earth, to a world of sinners hiding in rocks and caves and dens of the mountains.

This is the story of the sixth chapter.

This is the judgment gateway through which a long delayed King comes to lift His sceptre and wield His power.

He breaks the seventh seal and in the eighth chapter we read:

"And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets." v. 2.

These angels remain in silent waiting till the Son of

God under the form of another angel comes to the golden altar of the temple of heaven, takes a golden censer and mingles the incense with the prayers of the saints and offers it before the throne. He is then represented as taking fire from the altar, filling the censer and casting it into the earth. This action is followed by voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

An examination of the ninth verse of the sixth chapter will show that the Lord is here answering the prayer of the martyrs under the fifth seal, and responding to the cry of the 144,000, of the seventh chapter, sealed with the seal of the "living God."

Their prayer is for vengeance, vindication and judgment on their foes. He answers by flinging down this fiery gage into the midst of their enemies. The seven angels then take up their trumpets and sound.

The first angel sounds.

Fire and blood mingled with hail fall on the earth.

The second angel sounds.

A part of the sea is turned to blood, a part of the living creatures in the sea dies and a part of the ships therein is destroyed.

The third angel sounds.

A part of rivers and fountains of waters is turned to wormwood.

The fourth angel sounds.

A part of the sun, moon and stars is filled with darkness.

The ninth chapter is before us.

The fifth angel sounds.

The invisible world is opened.

Hordes of lost spirits come forth to possess and torment men.

The sixth angel sounds.

A still mightier army of lost spirits is now revealed incarnate in men, sending these forth to slay and kill.

Up to this moment the sounding of the trumpets teaches us that:

1. Previous to the coming of the Lord there will be terrible judgments on the earth; these judgments will be sent from the hand of the Lord upon the wickedness of the world; and as of old the plagues hardened the heart of Pharaoh, so now it is written:

"And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands." Revelation 9:20.

We turn to Revelation 14.

The Son of man is seen coming in the shekinal glory.

The harvest of the earth is reaped.

The great vine of the earth is cast into the wine press, and that wine press is called:

"THE WINEPRESS OF THE WRATH OF GOD." v. 19.

"And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." v. 20.

The annotation of this verse was written nearly a thousand years before. It is found in Isaiah 63:3, 4.

"I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come."

The winepress is not the cross of Christ.

Far from it!

The Lord is represented coming "glorious in his apparel," traveling, not in weakness, but in the "greatness of his strength."

His people Israel are not there to welcome Him.

He turns upon the nations and tramples them till their blood like the blood of the crushed grape stains all His garments and dyes them red.

It is a terrific figure.

It is His own utterance.

"THE DAY OF VENGEANCE IS IN MY HEART."

The day of vengeance was not in His heart when He hung upon the cross.

Oh, no!

On the cross He said: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23: 34.

No! this is not the crucified, hanging in helplessness on a Roman cross; this is the King bearing the marks of that cross, each nail wound gleaming like a fiery accusation against His foes. This is the King coming to execute vengeance and set up His undisputed reign.

This is the King coming to inaugurate, to introduce His kingdom through the crimson of a merciless, but perfectly just judgment.

The fifteenth chapter opens with the amazing words:

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." Revelation 15: 1.

Seven vials full of the wrath of God were given to these angels, and in the sixteenth chapter we behold them pouring the contents on the startled earth.

The first vial is poured out.

A great sore falls on the men who have accepted the Devil's Man.

The second vial is poured out.

The sea becomes blood, as of a dead man.

The third vial is poured out.

Rivers and fountains are turned to blood.

The fourth vial is poured out on the sun.

The heat becomes so great that men are scorched and because of their torment lift up their voices in blasphemy against God.

The fifth vial is poured out on the throne of the Devil's Man, the Beast, and his kingdom is filled with darkness.

The sixth vial is poured out.

Three unclean spirits go forth to incite the whole world to war.

The seventh vial is poured out into the air.

There are lightnings, thunderings and earthquakes such as the world has never before seen or heard.

Hail falls on men like great stones, as if the Heaven of God and all the holy inhabitants thereof were seeking to stone to death the wickedness of man.

Now! no matter what the vials symbolize, whether the plagues be actual or figurative, we have here a declaration that previous to the setting up of the kingdom of Christ, the Lord will pour forth His terrible and sore judgments; that vial after vial of the wrath of God, in some form, will break upon the devoted earth.

And now we turn to the last picture.

It is the divine description of the Coming of the Lord.

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself.

And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called the Word of God.

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." Revelation 19: 11-16.

What a description is this!

Let us analyze it.

1. He comes as a *Judge.*

2. He comes to *make war.*

3. His eyes burn like a *flame of fire,* the fire of anger.

4. His clothes are *stained with blood,* not His own blood, but the blood of others.

5. He is followed by *armies.*

6. A *sword* goes out of His mouth.

7. He comes to *smite* the nations.

8. He will rule with *a rod of iron.*

9. He treads the winepress of the *fierceness* and *wrath of God.*

And this treading the winepress is treading the people.

Listen:

"I will tread down the people in my anger, and make them drunk in my fury. . . . I will tread them in my anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." Isaiah 63: 6, 3.

What condition must obtain in a world that shall pro-

voke, and inspire such an unparalleled exhibition of wrath, anger and fierce judgment.

What more terrific language could be used to demonstrate that the Coming of the Lord is a coming in wrath and hot anger?

If the Spirit desired to demonstrate that the kingdom is to be introduced in the wrath of an indignant, outraged King, what other language could He have used that would more forcefully have proved it?

And now what actually follows this wrathful Coming? The closing verses of this chapter show us; the opening verses of the next, the twentieth chapter, convince us.

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him . . . These were both cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Revelation 19:20.

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." Revelation 20:1, 2.

1. Antichrist and the false prophet are overthrown.
2. Satan is bound for a thousand years.
3. The thousand years begin.

There is the result!

THE THOUSAND YEARS, THE LONG LOOKED FOR MILLENNIUM.

How is this result obtained?

By the preaching of the Gospel?

No!

It is attained by the Coming of the Lord.

And how does He come?

Peacefully, spiritually, as the result of the Spirit working in the heart and conscience of men?

Nay!

HE COMES PERSONALLY, VISIBLY, IN WRATH, ANGER, AND FIERCE JUDGMENT.

This description of the Coming given by the Spirit of God is therefore a demonstration that,

THE KINGDOM IS INTRODUCED BY JUDGMENTS AT THE COMING OF THE LORD.

We have thus listened to the testimony of our Lord and His apostles.

There is but one utterance from first to last.

The kingdom, the millennium is to be introduced by the personal Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with associated and terrific judgments on the earth. So far then from anticipating the cloudless skies of peace through which we may insensibly enter into the glad millennial days, we may expect the skies to darken and lower, growing blacker and blacker along the heavy horizon, and the mutterings of the divine wrath to be heard from time to time, increasing in tone and volume, in shorter and shorter intervals till there seems to be one continuous, terror inspiring peal.

As the age draws to its close, it will be like a ship in the night, now and then hearing the rise of a low, sullen roar till at last, through the night and the deepening gloom, a white line is seen, and the cry rings out on the startled ears: "The Breakers! The Breakers!"

This is the end towards which human society, with all its boasted art, science and culture is steadily drifting.

The low, sullen roar of the surf may be heard by those who will take the pains to listen.

The tramp of armed men, the voices of the mob, the

blows, steady and hard upon the foundations of the righteous, the increasing discontent of the masses, the wild and desperate efforts to cure the ills of inequality and poverty, the angry spirit of the discontented and the idle, the lukewarmness of the church, the open and unrebuked infidelity in its pulpits, in the world the spirit of lawlessness and wild beast ferocity that every now and then thrusts its monstrous visage into the face of men, the steady increase of crime, the faithlessness in places of public and private trust, the breaking down of standards, the lack of definite convictions and the wild rush for material gains and material pleasures, the accentuated denials by representative men, not only of the divinity of Christ, but of the personal existence of God, and the swift readiness to listen to any voice that can demonstrate this denial as reasonable, all these things bid us know, if we have an ear to hear, that the white line is rising, that the surf is just beyond us, and that a long suffering God will let loose upon the earth the scourge that shall tell it that He is the Master; and because He has been rejected in grace will come to rule with "a rod of iron and dash in pieces like a potter's vessel." Psalm 2:9.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE KINGDOM

(The Testimony of the Prophets)

"WHEN THY JUDGMENTS ARE IN THE EARTH, THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS."—Isaiah 26:9.

"FOR MY DETERMINATION IS TO GATHER THE NATIONS * * * TO POUR UPON THEM * * * ALL MY FIERCE ANGER: FOR ALL THE EARTH SHALL BE DEVOURED WITH THE FIRE OF MY JEALOUSY * * * THEN WILL I TURN TO THE PEOPLE A PURE LANGUAGE, THAT THEY MAY ALL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD, TO SERVE HIM WITH ONE CONSENT."—Zephaniah 3:8-9.

CHAPTER XIV

The Introduction of the Kingdom

(The Testimony of the Prophets.)

The Old Testament is full of lengthened descriptions of the kingdom. The prophet Isaiah draws a picture of the coming glory.

"And it shall come to pass in the *last days,* that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills: and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah 2: 1-4.

How is this glorious time to be introduced?

The answer is clear enough:

"Zion shall be redeemed with *judgment,* . . . and the *destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners.*" Isaiah 1: 27-31.

Again:

"For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low. . . . And they

shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." Isaiah 2:12-22.

How forcibly this recalls the picture given in Revelation 6:15-17. "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

The testimony of the Apostle Paul is in full accord with Isaiah:

"He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven . . . for our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:25-27.

The glad time is to come. Jerusalem is to be the center of God's dealings in the earth, the source of His manifestation. His rule shall be known and accepted among all nations; the kingdom shall be one of peace; war will be a trade forgotten, it shall be learned no more; the light of the Lord shall fill the earth; Zion, so long in bonds, shall be redeemed and all her converts shall dwell in righteousness. But before that blessed hour can come with its perfect peace, the heavens will tremble, the earth will shake, the Lord will arise and show such a face of wrath and judgment that multitudes shall flee and hide from the lightning of its glance.

He will come and Mount Zion shall be delivered, but it will be a deliverance in which sinners shall burn as stubble and the wicked as a furnace of fire, while the thun-

ders of judgment shall echo round the earth telling that the King is come.

In Isaiah 4: 2, 3, we read:

"In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy.

And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night." Isaiah 4: 2, 3, 5.

This is a special promise to Israel.

It is a declaration that the glory which once shone within the vail and rested upon the temple, shall return to the earth, and that the glory of the Lord shall fill Jerusalem.

But when shall this happy condition come?

The answer is in verse 4.

"*When* the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of *judgment,* and by the spirit of *burning.*"

In the parables of Matthew thirteenth our Lord declares that the age ends with flames leaping from a fiery furnace, and the burning and consuming of the dross therein; and *then,* after that, He says, the righteous shall shine forth in the kingdom of the Father.

All Scripture is one.

Nearly eight centuries in advance Isaiah declares that the kingdom and glory shall shine on the earth; but it will shine in beauty only *after* the *judgment* and the *burning.*

A wondrous vision of the millennial day is given in Isaiah 11:6-9.

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

"And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

"And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Nothing can be added to this description; it is the day of Heaven on earth.

How does it come about?

The answer may be found in verse 4.

"He shall *smite* the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the *wicked.*"

Compare this passage with the testimony of Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:8:

"And then shall that *Wicked* be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

The Apostle and the Prophet refer to the same event: the Coming of the Lord Jesus to overthrow the Antichrist and to set up the kingdom.

Thus the Apostle and the Prophet are not only agreed that the Antichrist fills in the gateway to the kingdom, that he will be found on the threshold, but that the Lord is coming in judgment to overthrow Antichrist, clear

out the gateway and open the kingdom to the righteous.

In the fourteenth chapter we have the promise of a restoration of Israel to their own land, the setting up of the kingdom promised to the fathers, and the assurance of rest and peace.

The manner in which this day of deliverance and rest for Israel is to be brought about is described in the thirteenth chapter.

"The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts *mustereth the host of the battle.*" Isaiah 13:4.

There is certainly nothing here to indicate a quiet or peaceful preface to the kingdom:

"They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land: Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a *destruction* from the Almighty."

"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners out of it . . . *And I will punish the world.*" Isaiah 13:5, 6, 9, 11.

In the fourteenth chapter a portrait is given of Antichrist which accords exactly with that given by Saint Paul. His downfall is celebrated and is seen to be coincident with the exaltation of Israel.

Antichrist is the king of Babylon, and Babylon and Jerusalem are always at opposites; when the one is up the other is down. Babylon is down here and Jerusalem is up. The overthrow of Babylon has been due to the destruction of its king, the Antichrist; and as he is over-

thrown by the personal Coming of the Christ, the kingdom of Israel is thus introduced by judgment at the Coming of the Lord.

Read Isaiah 14:4, and compare verses 12-15, 25, 26, with 2 Thessalonians 2:4-9.

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.

"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this *is* the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Isaiah 25:8, 9.

The Apostle Paul quotes this passage in 1 Corinthians 15:54.

It is the hour of the triumph of Christ and those who are His.

And how this triumphal hour is brought about is told in terrible and unmistakable language in the twenty-fourth chapter.

Read it at random!

Take a verse anywhere!

"Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty; and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof." Verse 1.

"The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.

"The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. *Then* the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed, *when* the Lord

of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients, gloriously." Verses 19, 20, 21, 23.

The condition which precedes the kingdom is one of confusion, trouble and sin; the Lord is seen coming forth to punish, to overthrow, and then to establish the kingdom.

The verification of this may be had by reading the Apostle's statement in 1 Corinthians 15: 54.

He quotes the passage—death shall be swallowed up in victory—and says:

"*Then* shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

When shall it be brought to pass?

The Apostle says at the sound of the trump.

That trump sounds, according to the same Apostle in 1 Thessalonians 4: 16, at the Coming of the Lord.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

It is at the sounding of the trump, says the Apostle, that the triumph over death takes place; and it is at the moment when death is swallowed up in victory, says Isaiah, that the kingdom is set up.

Thus the prophet and the Apostle both agree that the kingdom is introduced by the personal Coming of the Lord; and the prophet declares that this personal Coming will be in judgment on the sinners in the land.

In the twenty-sixth chapter we read:

"In that day!"

What day?

The day when death has been swallowed up in victory, in the day of the kingdom!

"In that day shall this song be sung in the land of

Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

"Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." Isaiah 26: 1, 2.

Israel as the righteous nation is here seen dwelling in peace and safety, keeping the truth and giving praise to the Lord in the land of Judah.

And now note well how this saving condition is introduced.

How does this nation learn to become righteous?

The answer is at hand:

"WHEN THY JUDGMENTS ARE IN THE EARTH, THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS." Verse 9.

The Lord's judgments have been brought upon the earth; the Lord's reign in judgment has begun; it is a reign, a continuous day of judgment. It is by this reign and rule of judgment that the nations of the earth are to become righteous. *Judgments,* not the quiet expansion of the Gospel; *judgments,* not the dealings in grace. It is by judgment that this prophetic picture of the earth filled with righteousness is to be brought about; judgments at the Coming of the Lord, and judgment during His rule on the earth.

Over against the declaration that the kingdom of Christ is to be introduced by the Millennium brought about by the Gospel of the grace of God; over this statement of modern theology and the teaching of all our theological seminaries, place this statement of the inspired prophet:

"WHEN THY JUDGMENTS ARE IN THE EARTH, THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Read now Isaiah 27: 6.

"He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root:

Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."

Israel is represented as returned, rooted in the land of promise and becoming the source of nourishment and life to the world.

You have here the heart of the Millennium on its earthly and time side.

How is this blessedness in Israel achieved?

Mark well the answer.

"For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." Isaiah 26:21.

It is by the personal Coming of the Lord in judgment.

Let us read Isaiah 32:

"Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.

"And a man shall be an hiding place from the wind . . . the shadow of a great rock in a weary land . . . and my people shall dwell in a peaceful habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." Verses 1-3, 18.

The introduction to this supreme state of quietness and rest is described in Isaiah 30:30-33.

"And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones. For through the voice shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod."

The Assyrian is the one also called the King of Babylon by Isaiah, the Man of Sin by Saint Paul and the Antichrist by Saint John.

Thus we again have a picture of the Antichrist barring

the way to the kingdom, and the Coming of the Son of God to overthrow him.

Read now Isaiah 31 : 4-8.

"For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the Lord of hosts *come down to fight for mount Zion,* and for the hill thereof.

"As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem: defending also he will deliver it, and passing over he will preserve it.

"Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him . . . saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and *his furnace in Jerusalem.*"

The Lord is coming down to fight for Mount Zion. He will throw open the furnace of judgment.

It is after this picture of the overthrow of the Assyrian, the Antichrist, and the upblazing of the furnace flames of judgment that it is said in the next chapter: "My people shall dwell in a peaceful habitation."

Isaiah 35 presents us with a description of the Millennial kingdom that transcends in beauty anything yet given.

"The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose . . . then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert . . . and an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness . . . no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there: but the redeemed shall walk there."

Turn back to Isaiah 34: 1-4, and behold the prelude of

this glorious time. The Lord invites all the earth to hear, the world and all that is therein. He then declares that His indignation is upon the nations and upon all their armies; declares that the earth shall be filled with the slain; that the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved; that the heavens shall be rolled together like a scroll; the Lord has a sword in His hand and declares it shall fall in judgment; then in verses 8, 9, it is written:

"For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion.

"And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch."

In Isaiah 42: 10-12, we have a promise of millennial blessing; but verse 13 shows that it is to be brought in by the Coming of the Lord in personal judgment:

"The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies."

And in verse 14:

"I will destroy and devour at once."

The same old refrain, a coming Lord, gathered enemies, the thunderbolt of judgment and the blessing on the earth.

Isaiah 51: 3, another promise:

"For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places, and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody."

But in verse 6 we read:

"Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like

smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner."

Other scripture has shown that there will be precisely these phenomena at the Coming of the Lord, and we have thus a witness that the millennial blessedness as associated with Israel is introduced by the Coming of the Lord in the way of judgment and the manifestation of His righteousness.

In the 52d chapter we learn that the Lord will comfort His people; He will redeem Israel.

How will He do this?

The answer is written in verse 10:

"The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of the nations."

We know from scripture after scripture that this baring of His holy arm means the lighting down of His power and the splendor of His judgment Coming.

The 60th chapter is accepted without controversy as descriptive of the millennium.

In it we learn that the time for Zion to arise and shine, has come. So full of light will Zion be that the nations of the earth will come thither to walk in the brightness of it. So great the influx to Jerusalem that it will become the world center of the mightiest activities. The supremacy of Israel in the earth will be so great that it is written:

"And the sons of strangers [Gentiles] shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee."

In verse 12 we are told:

"The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted."

The Gentiles shall sue unto them as we are told in verse 14:

"The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come

bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel."

The city will be full of wealth. Gold will be as plenteous as brass, silver as common as iron, brass like wood, and iron as thick as stone. Verse 17.

The people will be all righteous and they shall dwell in the land as their eternal inheritance.

Is this condition brought about by the preaching of the Gospel?

If so, then, to say the least, we have a curious result: the whole Gentile world flocking to Jerusalem with suppliant knee to own the supremacy of the Jew.

A curious result; that Gospel rejected by the Jew, and according to the inspired Word of God, to be rejected by them as a nation to the very last, placing those who have owned it in submission to those who have continuously and nationally refused it.

But the opening verse of the chapter shows how this state and condition are introduced:

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

Now how the glory of the Lord rises is shown in the closing verses of the preceding chapter:

"And the Redeemer shall come to Zion." Verses 19-21.

It is because the Lord Himself comes to Zion that the time for her to rise and shine is due; and thus it is evident that the shining, resplendent glory of Zion, the setting up of David's kingdom and the millennial triumphs, are the result of the personal Coming of the Lord, coming as we have seen again and again in judgment.

The 61st and 62d chapters are millennial.

The old waste places are to be rebuilt, the Gentiles to act as employees of the Jews:

"And strangers [Gentiles] shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen, and your vinedressers."

Everywhere throughout the earth the people of Israel will be acknowledged to be the people whom God hath pre-eminently blessed:

"And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people; all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed." Verse 9.

"They shall be called the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord." Isaiah 62: 1-2.

The people of Israel are notified how this high and transcendent time shall come in:

"Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, *his reward is with him,* and his work before him." Isaiah 62: 11.

That this phraseology signifies the personal Coming of the Lord in judgment is evident by the testimony of the Lord Himself:

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22: 12.

Let us turn to the 63d chapter.

The picture is presented of a traveller wearing dyed garments and coming from Edom.

His apparel is like that of one who has trodden in the winepress and stained all his garments.

In response to questions, this coming one, travelling in the greatness of His strength declares His identity:

"I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

When asked why His garments are red like one who has trodden the winepress, He replies:

"I *have* trodden the winepress alone . . . I will tread them [the people] in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, AND the year of my redeemed is come." Isaiah 63: 1-4.

Compare this prophecy with the vision in Revelation 19: 11-16.

"Clothed with a vesture dipped in blood . . . and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God."

In Revelation the Lord comes in this bloody dress to overthrow the Beast, bind Satan and set up the kingdom of the thousand years.

Here in Isaiah He is seen coming in the same gory garment, with a heart full of vengeance, and coming to BRING IN THE YEAR OF HIS REDEEMED.

Mark it well, the prophet says two deliberate things.

NAY!

THE LORD HIMSELF SAYS THEM:

1. He is coming with the *day* of vengeance in His heart.

2. He is coming with the *year* of the redeemed in His heart.

In common order the day must always precede the year.

Vengeance here precedes redemption.

The redemption of Israel and the setting up of the millennial kingdom are preceded by the vengeance Coming, the vindication Coming, the Coming in judgment of the Lord.

In Isaiah you have the prophecy.

In Revelation you have the scenic illustration of the prophecy.

In Isaiah you have the prophecy.

In Revelation you have the picture.

Prophecy and picture are a dynamic demonstration that the kingdom and reign of Christ on the earth are introduced by His personal Coming in judgment.

Isaiah 65.

In this chapter we have the announcement of a new heavens and a new earth.

In the meantime Jerusalem is rebuilt, Israel is filled with blessing, and the character of the time is indicated by the declaration that "the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord."

The previous chapter, however, describes a condition of sin and shame prevailing before all this brightness is realized.

The 65th chapter is but a prolongation of the woe and sorrow and sin description of the 64th chapter. That chapter opens with a cry for deliverance.

"Oh, that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence." Isaiah 64: 1.

It is after this prayer, the confession of sin, and the acknowledged desolation of Israel, that we have the vision of glory. In the order of statement, therefore, the Coming of the Lord in the majesty of His presence, precedes the blessing.

The 66th chapter opens with the Lord's assertion of His ownership of Heaven and earth. He denounces the sin and abomination in those who, in Israel, claim His

name; then in the 5th verse, He announces that He will appear to the joy of those who trust in Him, and to the shame and confusion of those who are guilty and sinful. A description follows of the regeneration of the nation:

"For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." Verse 8.

Assurance of supremacy over the nations is given and the producing cause of it made clear.

"For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

"For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many." Isaiah 66: 15, 16.

And this is the testimony of the Prophet Isaiah.

Not once does he hint either by type or figure that the Gospel is to be the producing cause of the millennial glory and kingdom.

Continually he talks of garments rolled in blood; of thunder and fire from the presence of a coming and avenging Lord and, *then,* the kingdom.

His pen portrays for us without stint the joys of that hour in which the Son of God as the Son of David shall sit upon His father's throne, and from Jerusalem, as the world's great capital, administer the ways of righteousness and truth; but the brighter, the more delightful the description he gives of that anticipated time, the more positive he is that it can be introduced only by the Coming of the Lord in glory and judgment.

If he speaks of the kingdom of God and His Christ, he unfailingly talks of that other kingdom of Satan which precedes it; and it is suggestive, that he mentions the

Antichrist more frequently than any other of the inspired writers.

The testimony of Isaiah therefore precludes any thought of a millennium till the Lord Himself brings it in through the brazen doors of a fiery judgment.

Let us now hear the testimony of the prophet Jeremiah.

"At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.

"In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers." Jeremiah 3: 17, 18.

Compare now Matthew 25: 31, 32.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.

"And before him shall be gathered all nations."

The king enters into judgment. He deals with the assembled nations according to the manner of treatment they have given to His *brethren,* His brethren in the flesh, Jews, Israel. To those who have owned and recognized them as identified with Himself, He says: "Come, inherit the *kingdom.*"

Now in Jeremiah we see Jerusalem as the *throne* of the Lord, the kingdom inherited, possessed, and all nations gathered to own the supremacy of the King.

In Matthew we see the kingdom introduced by the Coming of the King in judgment.

In Jeremiah we learn that the kingdom and the "throne of glory" of which Matthew speaks are in Jerusalem.

Matthew and Jeremiah corroborate each other.

In the 30th chapter the prophet pictures the millennial glory of Israel.

The nation restored to health, brought back to their own land, the city builded on its "own heap," filled with the voice of thanksgiving and merrymaking. They are His people and He is their God, even the Lord.

But turn to the seventh verse and read the condition that precedes this enviable state.

"Alas! for that day is great, so that *none is like it:* it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."

Now what is this time of Jacob's trouble so that none is like it?

Let the Lord Himself tell us.

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be." Matthew 24:21.

Our Lord is describing what will take place in the land of Jacob just previous to His appearing in glory.

In verse 29, He says:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven . . . and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

The great tribulation, that is the time of Jacob's trouble.

Jeremiah says Jacob shall be saved out of it.

Our Lord, speaking here in the record of Matthew, says He Himself is coming in the clouds of heaven to deliver him.

Jeremiah says, after the saving out of the tribulation the city shall be builded and the kingdom established.

Our Lord says He is coming to deliver him, and therefore to set up, the kingdom.

The unprecedented tribulation has not yet come.

The destruction of Jerusalem does not fill the requirements.

It does not fill them because our Lord says "*immediately* after those days" He should be seen coming in the clouds of heaven.

He never has been seen coming in the clouds of heaven.

The day of tribulation is yet future.

It must come before the day of blessedness.

It must come before the millennium.

And Jeremiah says Jacob shall be saved out of it.

And how does he say he *will be* saved out of it?

"In that day, saith the Lord, I will break his [Antichrist's] yoke from off thy neck." Verse 8.

How?

"Behold the whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind; it shall fall with pain upon the head of the *wicked.*

"The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: *in the latter days* shall ye consider it." Verses 23, 24.

Here you find that the *wicked* is he whose *yoke* is described in the seventh verse as upon the neck of Israel.

And is not this the very language in which the Apostle describes the Man of sin, the "Wicked," who is to be overthrown by the brightness of the Lord's Coming as set forth in 2 Thessalonians 2:8?

"And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

Thus Jeremiah in accord with Paul and the Son of God declares:

1. A great and terrible day of tribulation is coming.
2. A Wicked one will place a yoke upon the neck of Israel.
3. The Lord will come like a whirlwind to overthrow the Wicked one, break the yoke of Israel and save him out of his tribulation.
4. After the Coming of the Lord in the whirlwind of His glory, in the majesty of His judgment, Zion shall be restored, the city rebuilded, the people will own the Lord and be owned of Him; and thus the kingdom will be brought in.

Ezekiel gives a picture of the millennial glory.

The Lord assures him that Jerusalem shall be rebuilt and the holy temple established and that He will Himself dwell there in person.

He says:

"And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever." Ezekiel 43:7.

This condition of glory has its initial act.

We read:

"The glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east, and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory." Verse 2.

This is plainly a description of the personal advent of the Lord.

He comes to Jerusalem. He dwells in the city. The

place of His throne is in the temple; for He is a king and priest upon His throne.

After His glorious Coming it is written:

"And my holy name shall the house of Israel no more defile." Verse 7.

Thus Ezekiel teaches us that the glorious kingdom is set up by the glorious Coming of the glorious Lord; and in the last chapter and the last verse as a fitting climax to his millennial story he tells us that "the name of the city [Jerusalem] from that day shall be THE LORD IS THERE."

Scripture after Scripture testifies that the glorious Coming of the Lord is attended with judgment; thus another witness is added to the manifold testimony that the kingdom is to be introduced by judgment at the Coming of the Lord.

We pass into the book of Daniel.

In the second chapter Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon has a dream. In his dream he beholds an image with head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, toes part of iron and part of clay. He sees a stone cut out of the mountain without hand; it falls upon the feet of the image, breaks it in pieces, the fragments are carried away as the dust of a summer's threshing floor are swept away by the wind; the stone becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth.

Daniel gives the interpretation of the dream.

He says the image represents the whole course of Gentile rule in the earth from the days of Nebuchadnezzar until the Coming of the Son of man to set up his kingdom.

He declares that Babylon represented by Nebuchadnezzar is the first kingdom.

The breast and arms of silver represent a second king-

dom that shall succeed the kingdom of Babylon. This kingdom we find in the fifth chapter, thirtieth and thirty-first verse to be the Medo-Persian kingdom; the full name is found in the eighth chapter.

The belly and thighs of brass represent a third kingdom coming in as successor to the second. This third kingdom is identified in the eighth chapter as the kingdom of Greece.

The legs of iron represent the fourth and last kingdom which succeeds to the first three; from the New Testament we find that this is the kingdom of Rome.

The ten toes we are told are ten kings; for Daniel says, "in the days of *these* kings." These ten kings represent the final form of the fourth or Roman kingdom.

In the seventh chapter Daniel sees these ten kings united under an eleventh king as a sort of king of kings, and lord of lords.

The stone cut out of the mountain without hand is beyond dispute that "Stone rejected by the builders," the Christ of God.

The stone becoming a great mountain and filling the whole earth represents the Lord setting up His universal kingdom.

The stone falling, represents the descent, the Coming of the Lord.

Falling upon the feet of the image, smiting them and breaking them to pieces, the Coming of the Lord in judgment upon the ten kings under their great and impious head, the Man of sin, the Antichrist.

The falling, and the smiting, the sweeping away of the pieces like chaff, are a dramatic demonstration that the kingdom of the Christ is introduced by judgment at His Coming.

In the seventh chapter the testimony is clear and unmistakable.

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him." Verse 13.

This is unmistakably a vision of the second Coming of the Lord.

Now read what *follows* this Coming:

"And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Verse 14.

Can anything be added to that to make it clearer?

The Lord is coming in great power and glory.

After He comes in power and glory He will receive a kingdom.

But now let us turn to verse 23.

Here we have an inspired explanation of the fourth beast which Daniel sees in a vision.

This seventh chapter in the opening verses tells us that Daniel saw coming up out of the sea four great beasts. The first was like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard and the fourth diverse from all the other beasts; it had ten horns. While he was considering, another horn, an eleventh horn, rose up out of the midst of them and plucked up three horns; this horn had eyes like a man and a mouth speaking great things. These four beasts represent four kingdoms. This is evident from the fact that Daniel declares the fourth beast to represent a kingdom. The other three represent, then, necessarily, three kingdoms which precede this fourth; now this

fourth has a characteristic which connects it with the fourth part of the image seen in the second chapter; that characteristic is iron. From this it is evident that the whole four beasts represent the same kingdom indicated by the four parts of the image: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.

Daniel leaves us in no doubt about the fourth beast.

Hear what he says in this 23d verse:

"The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth."

He is clear about the ten horns out of the beast:

"And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise; and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time."

Here then we have a ten kinged confederacy under the headship of a person who is full of blasphemy and sin.

This portrait surely agrees with the description which Saint Paul gives of the Son of Perdition, the Man of Sin, and whom Saint John describes in Revelation thirteenth and seventeenth. In Revelation thirteenth we read of the Beast who is energized by Satan, and in the seventeenth chapter we are told that "the ten horns are ten kings . . . these have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them." Verses 12-14.

We turn back to Daniel and read:

"But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it to the end." v. 26.

Now mark the result:

"The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom *under the whole heaven,* shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." v. 27.

From Daniel then we learn:

1. Previous to the Coming of the Lord there will be an individual who will arise out of the region of the Roman empire.

2. He will be the head over ten kings in that region.

3. He bears all the marks which Saint Paul and Saint John ascribe to the Man of Sin, the Antichrist.

4. He will raise himself up in rage and blasphemy against God and His Christ.

5. Christ the Lord will come as the Son of man in great glory.

6. The usurping king and his confederates will be judged and overthrown.

7. After the Coming of the Son of man, the judgment and overthrow of the king and his kings, the promised kingdom of God and Christ will be set up.

Thus Daniel joins the witnesses who say that the kingdom, the millennial kingdom, is to be introduced by the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in judgment.

It is to be remembered that in the remarkable scene in Revelation fifth, after the Lord as the slain Lamb comes before the throne-sitter and takes the seven sealed roll or little book out of His hand, that the voices of the saints in Heaven break out into song crying:

"Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and *we shall reign* on [over] the earth."

The kingdom is consequent on the rising up and the coming forth of the King.

Finally, let us turn to the twelfth chapter of Daniel's prophecy.

"And at that time [the time of the "king," "the beast," "the eleventh horn," "the Prince that shall come," he who is the Man of Sin, the Antichrist, described in the preceding chapters] Michael shall stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

Note what Daniel says:

1. There shall be a time of trouble.

2. A time of trouble the like of which has never been known.

3. This trouble will be peculiarly upon Daniel's people, the Jews.

4. A deliverer will come to God's ancient people, and deliver them from that hour.

5. That deliverer will be Michael; that angel whose significant name is the question: "Who is like God?"

As Michael is present, as his voice is heard sounding in the moment when our Lord comes the second time (for according to 1 Thessalonians 4: 16, "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice

of the archangel"), then this deliverance belongs to the category of the Coming of the Lord.

6. Daniel's people will be delivered and brought into the age-lasting kingdom.

7. It is a deliverance that follows the Tribulation and is brought about by the personal Coming of the Lord.

Turn now to Matthew 24; read again what we have from headquarters, from the Lord Himself.

In this chapter He tells us:

1. A time of trouble is coming to Jacob, to Daniel's people, the Jews.

2. A tribulation unprecedented in the annals of the world:

"Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." v. 21.

3. An elect number among the people of the Lord (the Jews) will be saved through this tribulation.

4. Their salvation and deliverance will come to them by and through the personal appearing of the Lord from Heaven.

5. The Lord will come immediately after this tribulation, as it is written:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days . . they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." vs. 29, 30. That is to say, the Coming of the Lord is the signal for the ending of the tribulation, the moment for the deliverance of His people.

Thus Daniel and the Lord are in exact agreement; and he witnesses that the kingdom and the glory are established by the personal appearing of the Lord.

We now pass to the testimony of Joel.

"Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come." Joel 1:15.

The day of the Lord! that day which is the threshold of the kingdom; the day which holds in it the millennial hour; that day at the very thought of which the prophet breaks into lamentation; a day that shall come from the Lord like a whirlwind of destruction.

The third chapter gives us a distinctively millennial scene:

"Then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers [Gentiles] pass through her any more [tread her down].

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim . . . Judah shall dwell forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation . . . for the Lord dwelleth in Zion." Joel 3: 17-21.

And now examine how this era is introduced.

1. All nations (the ten nations of the Antichrist) will be gathered in the valley of Jehoshaphat.

"I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat." v. 1.

2. A proclamation will be made to the nations bidding them prepare for war.

"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near." v. 9.

3. Ploughshares will be beaten into swords and pruning hooks into spears.

"Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears." v. 10.

4. The Lord will cause His mighty ones (His angels) to come down.

"Thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord." v. 11.

5. The Lord Himself will come down and sit there as Judge.

"The valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about." v. 12.

Here you have precisely the same event recorded in Matthew 25: 31, 32.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him [his mighty ones] then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.

And before him shall be gathered all nations [all *the* nations, the ten nations, the heathen of Joel]."

6. Sun, moon and stars will be turned into darkness. Joel 2: 30, 31.

7. The Lord will "roar" out of Zion and utter His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake. Joel 3: 16.

And *then,* after all this gathering of the nations, and this mighty revelation of our Lord in judgment, *then,* shall Jerusalem be holy. v. 17.

Thus Joel joins his testimony to those who have preceded him, declaring that the kingdom is brought in through commotion in the heavens and the earth, through the crash of battle, and the Coming of the Lord in personal judgment.

We turn to Amos 9: 9-15.

We learn here:

1. The Lord will sift the house of Israel among all nations.

"I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve." v. 9.

2. He will bring a sword on the sinners of His people.

"All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword." v. 10.

3. After that He will raise up (restore) the tabernacle (the house) of David.

"In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof: and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old." v. 11.

Two things are clear here:

1. The Lord will bring judgment on Israel in a two-fold way: by scattering them among the nations, and by the sword.

2. After judgment on them He will restore the kingdom.

Now if we turn to the book of Acts 15: 14-17, we shall hear the Apostle James speaking in the great council at Antioch.

He says:

'Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

And to this agree the words of the prophet [the passage we are considering in Amos], as it is written,

After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up."

It is evident that the Apostle James, guided by the

Spirit, interprets the promise in Amos as signifying the Coming of the Lord, and thus emphasizes the testimony of the prophet, that the kingdom in Israel will be restored and established after that event—and not till after it.

Obadiah testifies to the same effect:

"For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen." vs. 15, 16.

Examination shows that he says:

1. The day of the Lord is near.
2. It will be a time of judgment on the Gentiles.
3. After the judgment Zion shall be delivered, and Jacob shall enjoy his possessions.

Micah tells us that the Lord will assemble Jacob and gather the remnant of Israel; that he will put them together as a flock of sheep, multiply them, and be their delivering Head.

"I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee! I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold." Micah 2: 12.

But what will He do before He thus gathers and establishes them.

Hear the answer.

"For, behold, the Lord cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth.

And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as waters that are poured down a steep place."

Micah says the kingdom of Israel will be established by the personal Coming of the Lord in judgment.

Let us now take up the sublime testimony of the prophet Habakkuk.

This testimony is given in the third chapter of his prophecy.

He says:

1. The Lord is coming, and His glory will cover the Heavens.

2. Before Him is the pestilence, and burning coals are under His feet.

3. He stands and measures the earth as one who is its rightful King.

4. He drives asunder, as a cleaving wedge, the confederacy of the nations (the ten).

5. He scatters the everlasting mountains.

6. The perpetual hills bow in adoration before Him.

7. His anger and wrath are seen against the rivers (as under the trumpets and the vials of the Revelation).

8. The whole universe shivers as its Maker and Master passes to the enthronement of His glory.

9. His march through the land is that of indignation.

10. He threshes the heathen as one thresheth the chaff from the wheat.

And why does the Lord come forth in this madness of glory, in this fierce splendor of judgment?

And this is the answer:

"Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people." v. 13.

And what is the supreme stroke which delivers them?

Behold again the answer.

"Thou woundest the head out of the house of the *wicked.*" v. 13.

Here you have the same lurid figure, the same wicked one that we have met everywhere in this investigation: he who is the Man of Sin, the Antichrist. Thus Habakkuk proclaims the deliverance of Israel, the bringing in of

the covenant kingdom, and therefore the millennial day, by the Coming of the Lord with flashing chariots, gleaming arrows, glittering spears and the thunders of judgment.

Let us examine the testimony of Zephaniah.

"Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms [the ten], to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For *then* will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.' Zephaniah 3:8, 9.

"*Then,* will I turn to the people a pure language."

Then shall all call upon the name of the Lord.

Then shall all serve him with one consent.

THEN!

When?

Listen to the Lord's own declaration:

1. "The day that I rise up to the prey."
2. Assemble the kingdoms (the ten).
3. Pour upon them mine indignation.
4. All my fierce anger.
5. The fire of my jealousy.
6. *Then* will I turn to the people a pure language.
7. *Then* they may all call upon the name of the Lord.
8. To serve Him with one accord.

Now read v. 14:

"Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy [the Antichrist]; the king of Israel, even

the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more."

Note here:

1. Zion is to sing because the Lord hath cast out her enemy.

And who is he but that Man of Sin, the Oppressor, the wild Beast, the Antichrist?

2. The Lord has taken the place of the false Christ, the false God, and his false prophet, and is in the midst of Jerusalem, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Then we get verses 16-20:

A magnificent state of millennial rest and glory consequent on the Coming of the Lord and the overthrow of the Antichrist.

Listen to it:

"In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack.

The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing. . . .

Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee; and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame.

At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord."

We turn to Zechariah.

We take up the twelfth chapter.

We learn:

1. A time is coming when the nations (the ten) shall be gathered against Jerusalem.

2. In that day the Lord shall defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

3. He will deliver Judah first.

4. He will make the house of David as God, as the angel of the Lord to their enemies.

But how will He do this?

We get the answer in verse 10.

"They shall look upon me whom they have pierced."

The Apostle John annotates this expression and gives it location:

Hear his annotation:

"Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all the kindreds of the earth [literally, all the tribes of that land] shall wail because of him." Revelation 1:7.

Now turn back to Zechariah and read the rest of the tenth verse:

"And they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born."

"And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then shall he answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." Chapter 13:6.

Clearly—the deliverance of Israel—their repentance, and the setting up the kingdom—are all brought about by the Coming of the Lord in judgment.

Examine the fourteenth chapter.

"Behold the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

For I will gather all nations [the ten] against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall

go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof towards the east and towards the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah; and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." vs. 1-5.

Here the prophet teaches:

1. The day of the Lord is coming.

2. In that day Jerusalem will be in a state of siege by the ten nations of the Antichrist. The Lord will come with all His saints.

3. He will fight against those nations.

4. He will stand on the Mount of Olives.

5. The mount of Olives will be opened as a way of escape for the faithful shut up in the city.

And now behold the final result of this glorious Coming:

"And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." v. 9.

All this would seem to be clear enough; clear that the kingdom and glory in Israel and thus the kingdom and glory throughout the whole earth is to be established by the Coming of the Lord in judgment; but the prophet amplifies his testimony to this effect.

He says:

"And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth." v. 12.

No such terrible judgment ever fell on the Roman armies under Titus, in the siege of Jerusalem centuries ago.

The time is future.

"In that day a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them."

What day?

The day when the Lord shall come with all His saints and stand on the mount of Olives; the day when by a mighty earthquake the mountain shall be riven asunder and a way of escape made for His elect.

There can be no doubt about it! It is judgment from the presence of the Lord at His Coming.

Judgment! judgment, swift, terrible!

Read what follows:

"In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar.

Yea, every pot in Jerusalem, and in Judah, shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts." vs. 20, 21.

The Coming of the Lord.

Judgment.

The setting up of the kingdom of righteousness and holiness.

The days of millennial splendor.

This is the order, the divine order according to the testimony of Zechariah.

Let us hear the last witness of the Scriptures of Israel.

Hear the voice of the last prophet before the long silence rolls in, the silence that is to be broken by the song of the angels on the starry night of the First Advent.

"Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth." Malachi 3:2.

"And I will come near you in judgment." v. 5.

He says:

1. The Lord is coming.
2. *He is coming in judgment.*
3. The judgment at His Coming is so terrible that it raises the question: "Who may abide?"

"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts."

The statements are clear; they are easily read:

1. The Lord is coming.
2. He is coming in wrathful judgment.
3. He is coming to deliver those who fear His name.
4. They shall be His jewels and He will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Chapter 3:17.

Thus the prophet teaches that the glory of Israel, and

therefore the glory of the whole earth, is to be introduced by the personal Coming of the Lord in judgment.

Thus we have gone through the Old Testament.

We have examined all that has been said directly about the kingdom, about the millennium.

And, although we have examined the testimony of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Zechariah and Malachi, ten prophets in all, we have not so much as seen the word "Gospel" in connection with the coming of the kingdom; not a line, not a thought that would lead us to imagine that the millennium would be introduced through the quiet and persuasive influence of that Gospel, but always by the personal Coming of the Lord and associated judgment.

Again and again we have asked the question as to the method by which the kingdom and glory are to be introduced.

We have asked this question of the New Testament as well as of the Old. We have asked it of our Lord.

And although we have studied His word and the word of His Apostles, we have not found so much as a hint that there would be a millennium before the return of the Lord Himself.

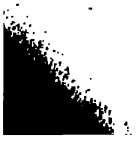
On the contrary, from Matthew to Revelation, from Jesus to John, from Isaiah to Malachi, we have found in positive statement, in symbols, in figures, in types and in resplendent prophecy that there would be no millennium, that there could be no millennium till Jesus, our Lord should come, and that therefore, the Coming of the Lord would be, must be, and *is* PRE-MILLENNIAL; that over all the pathway leading to the kingdom is written in letters of living light, written in the glare of the lightnings, in the accent of the thunders, in the roar of the seas, in the

tread of armies, in plague and pestilence, in the awful figure of the Antichrist, in the flaming eyes of a descending Christ, the one terrible, unspeakable word, JUDGMENT.

Judgment! not the gospel; the wrath of God, not the peace of God; these are the wide, terrible gates of brass through which the kingdom and the glad millennial day are introduced.

RECALLING THE WITNESSES

"IN THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES SHALL EVERY WORD BE ESTABLISHED."—2 Corinthians 13:1.



CHAPTER XV

Recalling the Witnesses

At the risk of repetition let us recall the witnesses and hear their testimony in sum.

The Ratio of the Gospel.

The Son of God.

He says that during His absence the Gospel, the Word, the Seed, will obtain only a fractional reception.

It will be opposed by the world, the flesh and the Devil to the end.

James, the Apostle.

He says the Lord in this dispensation is " taking out " a people for His name.

Taking out is selection, it is election.

This dispensation therefore is a time of election, not universal reception.

While the call is universal, His sheep only hear His voice.

While the hindrance on the one side and the wilful rejection of the Gospel on the other give the appearance of failure, it is only apparent: the purpose of God which He purposed from the beginning, to "take out " a people, has never slacked a moment.

God's forewisdom has anticipated the hindrance of the Devil, the temptation of the world, and the unbelief of the flesh, and the fractional reception of His message has not taken Him by surprise.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROFESSING CHURCH.

The Son of God.

Our Lord testifies that while men sleep the Devil will introduce tares among the wheat and thus mix the profession of Christ in the world.

This mixed profession will grow, expand, and send out its branches in all the world.

Its growth and expansion will be in exact proportion as it roots itself in the world.

Having succeeded in imitating the church of Christ in the world, having corrupted the actual profession of Christ, the Devil himself will enter in and find satisfactory shelter there.

This expanded and mixed profession of Christ will become thoroughly permeated with false doctrine and the energy of the flesh.

Starting out to meet a Coming Lord, the Church will grow tired, give up the "Hope" and fall asleep in the spiritual night of the world.

When He arises to come forth He will look out upon the earth and ask the question which can have only one answer, and that a negative: "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

Paul, the Apostle.

False teachers will arise, if the Lord tarries, and the church will be divided into sects (denominations).

There will be a great apostasy, a general down grade.

Men will have a form of godliness but will deny the power thereof.

The professing church will not endure sound doctrine, but will seek teachers who shall minister to the pride and the lusts of the flesh.

The Devil will transform himself into an angel of light

and his ministers into *ministers of righteousness.* Righteousness of individual character and works will be preached, and not the righteousness of the blood.

James, the Apostle.

The church will turn aside from the simplicity of that brotherhood in which all are one, and will recognize in the assembly the distinctions of "good apparel," "wealth," "persons of men" and turn aside from the poor.

It will forget the power of the Spirit and bow down to the power of money.

Peter, the Apostle.

The professing church will be full of mockers, walking after the flesh and denying the imminency of the Lord's Coming.

John, the Beloved Apostle.

The church will depart from first love, yield to the Jewish thought of a kingdom on earth, form a union with the state, become paganized as well as judaized, usurp the headship of Christ, grow rich in the world's wealth, poor in the wealth of heaven, and be spewed out and repudiated at the last by the Son of God Himself. After its repudiation by Him it will be taken up by Antichrist as his guilty and filthy paramour, finally repudiated even by him and trampled in the mire beneath the feet of his associated kings.

THE COURSE OF THIS AGE.

Testimony of the Son of God.

As it was in the days of Noah, as it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be at the end of this age.

Paul.

At the end of the age Antichrist, the Lawless one, ex-

alted to the rule and headship of the world; the world accepting the Devil's son rather than the Son of God.

Peter.

The age ending in mockery and materialism.

James.

Great wealth in the hands of the few. Poverty and misery among the masses. The cry of oppression going up into the ears of God.

Rich men suffering on account of the wealth which they have unjustly heaped together for "the last times."

Jude.

A world full of ungodly sinners, lips breathing ungodly speeches, and lives expressing ungodly deeds.

John.

A world led by a wild beast king and a false prophet, denying God the Father and the Son.

Antichrist in mad rebellion against the God of the Bible.

Antichristianity instead of Christianity.

The Introduction of the Kingdom.

The Son of God.

Wheat and tares separated. The tares cast into the fire. The kingdom seen through the gates of a furnace. The dragnet of the great profession brought to the shore, the good taken out and put into vessels, the bad cast away; then the kingdom seen through the fiery gates of judgment. The sheep and goats separated one from another and the kingdom brought in by judgment. The Nobleman rewarding his own and calling for a sword on his enemies, the enemies who had previously cried out that they would not have this man to reign over them; then, after the judgment, the kingdom established.

Paul.

The Son of God coming in flaming fire to overthrow the man of sin and set up the righteous kingdom of God.

James.

The judge standing before the door. Judgment the threshold over which the King passes into His Kingdom.

Peter.

The heavens in flames, the earth melting in judgment, then the kingdom.

Jude.

The Lord and ten thousands of His holy ones coming to clear the ungodly out of the earth and set up the long looked for kingdom.

John.

The face of a lamb filled with wrath. The sounding of trumpets. Vials of wrath poured out on the earth. Woes, scourges, plagues, pestilence, armies marching on the earth and, at the last, the Son of God Himself at the head of armies of Heaven coming to overthrow the armies of earth. The Lamb turned into an avenging King with eyes of flame, voice of wrath, sceptre of iron and hand lifted to smite, and *then* the kingdom.

The Prophets.

A time coming when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as waters the face of the deep; a time when all the inhabitants of the earth shall learn righteousness; a time when war will be forgotten and peace shall flow like a waveless river; a time when the reign of God, the Lord, will be undisputed, and when the Word of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem unto the ends of the earth; a time when all the promises concerning the covenant kingdom and the covenant people will be

fulfilled to the letter, and the whole earth break forth into joy and singing.

This time of gladness and infinite delight introduced under parting skies and trembling earth, the sea and the waves roaring madly, men's hearts failing them for fear, and the very globe rocking and reeling like a drunken man, like a frail cottage in the storm.

The kingdom introduced by the Lord and associated judgments; this is the unvarying testimony of the prophets.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH.

The Son of God.

Coming in an hour that no man knoweth, no man on earth, not an angel in heaven, nay, not the Son of man Himself. "What I say unto one I say unto all, Watch." "Be ye ready!"

Paul.

"I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be *preserved* blameless *unto* the Coming of the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

James.

"The coming of the Lord draweth *nigh.*"

John.

The Lord coming like a "thief" in the night; exhorts the church to watch.

The meaning of this attitude:

THE COMING OF CHRIST IS IMMINENT.

SUMMING UP

"NOW OF THE THINGS WHICH WE HAVE SPOKEN THIS IS THE SUM."—Hebrews 8:1.

CHAPTER XVI

Summing Up

Let us sum up.

A Gospel not universally received.

A Church corrupted by Satan, indwelt by him, repudiated by Christ, the Lord, and trampled on at last by the Devil himself.

A world going on to lawlessness, accepting an Antichrist, rejecting the God revealed in nature, and His Son revealed in the Bible.

The closing hours of the age filled with terrific judgments from Heaven and the Son of God coming in flaming fire, in wrath and anger, to smite the earth.

The Church, the real and the true, the first born from the dead, exhorted to be in the attitude of constant expectation for the return of the Lord—in person.

This is the sum of what we have found in Holy Scripture concerning the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Instead of asking the question, "Is the Coming of the Lord before or after the Millennium?" we might better ask why such a question was ever necessary with an open Bible? How is it possible that any intelligent student of the Word could be in doubt about it; how could any student ever think, even for a moment that there was such a thing as Post-Millennialism?

So far as Scripture goes there is but one thought from end to end in the matter. The Lord is coming, and in spite of the apparent failure of the Gospel; in spite of the seeming failure of the Church, and the growing wickedness, infidelity and lawlessness in the world, He will set up

His promised kingdom, and for at least a thousand years, bless the world with the administration of a government on the principles of Heaven.

But if we are put to it to answer the question, then we answer it:

The Coming of the Lord *is* Pre-Millennial; it cannot be otherwise.

There can be no millennium till He comes.

So far we have refrained from an actual appeal to history, or condition and circumstances of the times, but we may do so now.

Let him who believes that the world is to be converted by the Gospel and then to continue a spiritual kingdom of Christ for a thousand years, stand here in this beginning of the Twentieth century of preaching and own the fact, that, at this hour, but a fraction of the human race accept the Gospel, and of that fraction, but a fraction who live within the law of its demands; let such persons to whom the thought of a millennium, a spiritual millennium, before the Coming of the Lord is dear, and who regard with horror any doctrine which seems to minimize the power and efficacy of the Gospel, look at the actual history of the church in the world, at the history which is written in the book of the New Testament; a history whose pages are full of the story of sects and divisions, failures and sins, of the shipwreck of faith and open apostasy. Let them read the history written by other hands than those of the Apostles: let them read of the times when professed Christians slew each other for difference of doctrine; of that time when the church had departed from the simplicity of the Apostolic days, from the Pastor and the Deacon, from the officers as Christ appointed them, from the plain assembly room and table of

the Breaking of Bread, to the time when the church had become a monarchy, an empire in the world, holding councils with kings, raising armies and making wars; to that time when her buildings were temples, the homes of her officers palaces, and her treasury filled with the gathered wealth of a suppliant world.

Let such an one who cares, look at the simple pastor become an Archbishop, and the Bishop a Cardinal, the Cardinal a Pope, and the Pope, a veritable God on earth worshiped by men.

Let him look at that dark hour when the historic Church in the world had buried learning and spirituality out of sight; that hour when the church was a name and symbol of terror; when she murdered, burned and tortured; that hour when she seemed to have become the cage of every unclean bird and the hold of every foul spirit, the habitation of demons; when her priests were the priests, not of holiness and truth, but of unspeakable sin and shame, while the blood of the martyrs of Jesus stained all her garments; and when the harlotry and filthiness of her life rose up as a stench before God and men.

Let him pass from Popery to Protestantism and remember that only within a century has the Protestant church thought at all of seeking to preach the Gospel to every creature. Let him look at Protestantism with its hundreds of denominations, its sects, divisions and controversies; let him watch the craze of the hour in Protestantism, the effort to organize the church itself out of existence by the number and character of the organizations within it; let him examine the whole trend of the church to-day, and he will find it, either given over to the spirit of pleasure, indifferent to the ways of God, cold, lifeless; or, in its activities, calling on all the energy of the flesh,

leaving the ground of the divine and supernatural, and going down to the lowland and level of the wholly natural; churches turned into clubs and debating societies, into social assemblies and entertainment bureaus; the doctrine of regeneration set aside and reformation exalted; the salvation of the individual made secondary to the salvation of society; the blood of sacrifice repudiated as the ground of approach to God, and character set up in its stead; the Sermon on the Mount brought in and the sermon from the cross shut out; the Golden Rule, instead of the Gospel of Death and Resurrection, made the common ground of meeting of all men of differing "views"; the resurrection of the body denied and the personal Coming of Christ considered as an exploded fantasy; the Old Testament looked upon as worthless in history, and not always valuable in morals; Moses recognized as a literary fiction, the Patriarchs as having no better foundation; the story of creation and the fall of man accepted as poor plagiarisms from Babylonish legends and folk-lore; Heaven the dream of blind enthusiasts or neurasthenics; the hereafter a matter of absolute speculation, Jesus Himself only an illuminated specialist in that direction, the highest wisdom an assertative ignorance concerning it, he being wisest of the wise who daily sowing doubts in the mind of the new coming generation of preachers, can say with serenity on the threshold of the grave: "I do not know where I am going," and saying it, receive the plaudit of a church which owns his confession as their own status.

Let this millennial dreamer look at the world, the world that through all centuries has been the slaughter house of the good and true, the world that has always led right to the scaffold and wrong to the throne, let such an one look

at the world to-day, see the distress in nations, the perplexity, the unrest, the fear; let him face the fact that at this moment, as never before in all her history, the world is preparing for war; that factories are working night and day to turn out the implements of destruction; that after two thousand years of Gospel, two thousand years since the angel song, "Peace and good will," floated over the earth, two of the foremost nations, practically out of sheer exhaustion or the fear of it, have ceased their strife of months of the bloodiest military murder and butchery; let him face the fact that in the United States within a decade nearly a hundred thousand murders have been committed under the shadow of church steeples and within the sound of Gospel hymns; let him face the fact that the age in which we live is rushing on with the hurrying step of money madness, building round the soul of the rising generation the thick wall of materialism, rejecting the Bible, rejecting all promises of a future and proclaiming that the life that now is is the only life that should appeal to, or inspire intelligent men; let him face the fact that everywhere there is a revolt against authority among the masses, as one of the red flag societies placed upon its banner in a public procession: "No Boss Below, No Boss Above."

Let the man who dreams or has been taught to dream that we are marching to the purple and the gold of millennial days through the gradual betterment of society, the advance of the church to higher spiritual grounds, look at this world, at the cold facts which honest examination reveals, and then say whether he can conscientiously and honestly believe that we have any evidence of a millennium to-day, or any prospect of it by Gospel preaching.

Nay! no man who studies the Word of God outside of *trained prejudices;* no man who looks at the world and the facts within it to-day, can make any such mistake.

Post-Millennialism fades away as a foolish dream, without foundation in the Word of God, and without so much as the shadow of the shadow of a foundation in the condition of the times.

THE SCENIC PROPHECY

Or, The Whole Argument in a Picture

"AND I SAW HEAVEN OPENED, AND BEHOLD, A WHITE HORSE: AND HE THAT SAT UPON HIM."—Revelation 19:11.

CHAPTER XVII

The Scenic Prophecy;

or, The Whole Argument in a Picture.

In the book of the Revelation, in the nineteenth chapter, there is a great picture.

The Spirit has painted it.

It is the vision of the Second Advent.

It is the story of the Lord's Coming told in colors.

It is the great Doctrine and some of its related truths in figured action.

The very position which this picture holds, is of itself, profoundly suggestive. It comes in after the vision of the seven churches, after the record of a fallen and repudiated profession, after the breaking of the seals and the hardening judgments, after the trumpets and the terrific soundings, after the pouring forth of the vials, after the confusion and the anguish on the earth, after the exaltation and impious course of the Beast, after the vision of the Scarlet woman, the revelation of her uncleanness and wickedness. In short, we are led up to the Second Coming of Christ, not through the songs of chanting choirs, hymning the praise of an accepted Lord, but through trembling heavens and shivering earth. The sun and the moon are confounded, the sea and the waves roar; war, famine and pestilence are on the road, vieing with each other to fill the land with terror. Plagues and terrifying phenomena rush out at every angle; and there are voices and thunderings and lightnings and pillars of smoke. The underworld is opened and the spirits of the dead are stirred, demons possess men and discordant cries from

both men and demons fill the air. Honor and truth perish or flee away into the wilderness; wickedness and disobedience of the most lurid and sulphurous sort scorch the highways, expanding the trail of the Serpent over all things. Blood is the color of the hour; everything is red, cardinal red, crimson, gory, terrible. Judgment is heard in the heavens. Judgment on the earth. Denial of God the Father. Denial of God the Son; fear and the pit yawning as the mouth of a beast yawns.

This is the pathway along which we are conducted to that moment when the heavens open and the Son of God comes forth as King of kings, and Lord of lords.

It is indeed suggestive.

One would think that an average reader passing over such a mosaic of horrors, through such an atmosphere of confusion and clamor, amid tempest and terror, would be the last person in the world to emerge into the light, and then proclaim, that before the Coming of the Lord the earth would be at rest beneath a cloudless sky of unbroken peace.

The very fact that the Spirit of God has set this vision of the Coming Lord after all the turmoil, panic, pell-mell confusion and hell let loose on earth, would seem to be the demonstration of demonstrations that there can be no millennium till the Lord comes; that only His Coming can clear the heavens of clouds and storms, and evacuate the earth of the Devil and his confederates.

But the Spirit has not contented Himself with simply saying that the Coming of the Lord is after all these things. He gives a Pre-Raphaelite detail of that Coming which both in its initial and closing lines sets before us the truth in such fashion that it is lifted beyond all controversy or question. Let us read the description:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself.

And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called the Word of God.

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These were both cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that

sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Jesus a thousand years." Revelation 19: 11-21; 20: 1-4.

Let us sit down before this picture and examine it in detail.

1. *The opened heavens and the emerging Lord.*

The last full view we had of this Son of God was in the fifth chapter.

There we were introduced to a court scene. The Son of God was represented in the guise of a lamb bearing the marks of a death which he had suffered and survived; He is seen taking out of the hand of supreme power the right and title to come forth and reign as the Lord and God of the earth. We hear the redeemed in heaven, redeemed by His blood, singing in anticipation of that moment when they shall come forth with Him to establish the kingdom; for they sing: "We shall reign on [over] the earth."

From the fifth chapter till the nineteenth we have had no intimation of the coming forth of the Lord save in the angelic anticipation that He was present in the hardening judgments and about to be revealed; during all the time occupied in these intervening fourteen chapters His place of session is still in Heaven; He has not yet officially left His Father's throne: The nineteenth chapter opens with the voice of much people in Heaven, saying, "Alleluia; salvation and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are His judgments."

They celebrate the execution of His judgments on the earth, judgments which have culminated in the destruction of the great false profession of His name.

Standing on the threshold of the sixth chapter we look forward to the judgments that are about to fall on the earth, preparing the way for the Coming of the King; in the nineteenth chapter we look back and hear the voices announcing that the judgments have been made and the way has been cleared for the final coming forth of Him whose right it is to reign.

The marriage of Christ and His church is now announced, the marriage supper is set and the invitations sent out.

All things are ready.

The King is about to make His appearance in company with His redeemed and glorified.

If we glance back at the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew's Gospel we shall find that our Lord is there represented as first coming to the marriage, and then in the closing part of the chapter is seen as the Son of man in glory coming to judge the nations and set up His kingdom. It is also to be noted that when the nobleman returned from the far country with his title as king and his

right to the kingdom, his first act was to call his own about him and deal with them; *after* that he turned his attention to his enemies and set up the kingdom; so now, we behold the marriage and the bride of His choice, the Church, gathered with Him into the Heaven above all storm and judgment, feasting with Him at the marriage supper, at the banquet of love. As at every banquet given by a king each has the place belonging to his or her rank, necessarily it must be so here; thus in this marriage scene and festal board we have the moment also when our Lord as the Nobleman shall deal with His own, arranging the place each shall hold in the royal economy and kingdom about to follow.

And now Heaven opens and the King comes forth.

Let us gaze long and well upon the portrait given here.

He comes as the Faithful and True.

The one who has stood over against the unfaithful and false.

As a Judge.

Judgment is not yet over, evil has not yet been entirely eradicated, the world is not yet righteous; beside all, His reign and rule is to be a reign and rule of judgment a thousand years long; the "day" of judgment is measured not by years but by ten centuries; the kingdom is a kingdom of judgment.

He comes forth as a Warrior.

He was here on earth as the Minister of peace. For twenty centuries He has been holding out the olive branch. For twenty centuries there have been no thunderings on His throne; all has been at rest, and in the silence He has had His ear open to hear the plaints of men; but now the era of peace is over, it is the moment of war, and as "the Man of War" He goeth forth to the prey.

The whole figure is full of anticipated conflict and battle.

His eyes are as a flame of fire.

The eyes of one who is aroused and indignant, in whose veins beats the pulse of a hot anger and wrath so fierce, that the flame light shines from eyes once filled with tears for a Lazarus, and once moist with mercy for a wandering world.

A flame of fire, a search light that will penetrate to the inmost thought and intent of the heart, laying bare in its awful revelation every fibre of sin, twisted and tightly wrought, even in purposes supposed to be pure, scorching, burning, shriveling every hypocrisy, and withering away every breath of evil desire. Oh the eyes of the pure! how hot and burning they are, in their very innocency going down into the well of the evil soul like the candle of the Lord to search out and make known to the last detail; but these eyes of the Lord, the eyes of holiness, the eyes of infinite deity, the eyes of depthless love and unquestioning trust for those who trust Him, oh! how they will burn, and scintillate, and flash with their flame of sincerity, truth, and shadowless righteousness. Of old, Simon Peter bending amid the glittering silver of heaped up fishes in his overladen boat, looked up in His face, and caught the gleam of that holiness that is too pure to tolerate sin, and fell down all of a heap before Him, crying out in tones whose pathos of pain and honesty reach our ears to-day: "Depart from me, oh Lord, for I am a sinful man": and he loved that Lord; but in that hour when these eyes shall look upon those who are sin, and only sin, what cries of agony will rise to meet the face that gazes upon them, its very calmness like the unclouded sun? No wonder that with one accord they shall cry

unto the rocks to fall on them, and the mountains to hide them from His face, and for the dens, in their deep and clammy darkness to shut out the flaming eyes.

His head is many times crowned.

Once it was crowned, crowned with the crown men gave Him in derision. The crown which penetrated his sensitive soul with the thorns of human unbelief and mockery, as the actual thorns penetrated His sensitive flesh and stained Him with blood.

And now He lifts Himself up and comes forth, not as the Sufferer, but as the Conqueror; as the One who will rule and reign, before whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

He has a name that is known only to Himself.

He is coming forth to greet the world with a cold and terrible reserve.

He did come as the revelation, the manifestation of the heart of God, and the full beauty of the Truth, inviting men to come to Him that they might be enlightened.

And they refused.

He was despised and rejected of men.

He will come forth holding the great secret that men ought to have known.

He will guard his secret; no longer will He reveal Himself in that intimacy of love and blessing which He sought to give. Love at the first throws itself open without a stint, without defense; once wounded, it draws itself within itself, like the petals of a bruised rose; once rejected, it sets a seal upon its inmost pulse.

He comes forth as one who no longer seeks either friendship or love; as one who is self contained in His masterfulness and royal in His independence of men.

His garments are dipped in blood.

Not the first time is it that His raiment has been stained; once it was crimson with the flowing of His own blood. But now, alas! the blood is the blood of others.

Once He was lifted up that men might shed His blood; now He descends that He may shed the blood of men.

He is called the Word of God.

Through all the centuries He has been announcing Himself as such in the name of grace, forbearance and love; as the Word of God assuring forgiveness of sin and salvation to all who would trust Him as that Word.

Now He will enunciate His Claim by terror and might. He will write it in the blood of His foes.

Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword.

That sword is His word, "sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

He has sent that word forth that it might slay sin in men, and bring them to repentance and peace; that word shall go forth now, not to bless, but, mark it well, to *smite.*

He never opened His mouth on earth that it was not for blessing and benediction to men; now He will open it to curse and fulfill the words of the prophet:

"Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." Malachi 4:6.

He shall rule with a rod of iron.

Coming as a King with an iron sceptre.

What a keen mockery!

The last great world empire was the empire of iron, Rome and her iron legions; the final form of rule in this

world will be Roman, the empire of iron will be revived with its ten kings, the Beast with the great iron teeth, and over all the man of the iron heart, the Antichrist, the Devil's son.

And God's Son will come and His sceptre shall be of iron, iron of might that shall smite upon the Beast and his confederates and prove them not iron but worthless, sin-stained clay. "As the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers." Revelation 2:27.

His kingdom will not be a kingdom of grace but a kingdom of strict righteousness and justice; his sceptre will not be the gold of refinement and polished rest, but the iron of rule, of hardness and unyielding severity.

He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Behold the cloudless skies of Palestine! The hills are vineclad and the purple grapes gleam in the golden sun.

They gather the grapes, great clusters, wonderful clusters from the vines of the earth and cast them into the winepress that waits them, till the press is full.

And lo! the treader of the winepress! He leaps upon the piled-up beauty of grapes. He tramples them beneath his feet with wild delight, and the rounded grapes are broken, the crimson hearts break and the flood pours forth like blood, blood from veins and arteries of men; and the red stain covers His feet, until they sink and sink in the reddening, deepening tide; and the stain is on all His garments.

He laughs, he shouts, he sings, and they come to him with laughing lips and arms that are heaped, fair, yet sun browned girls, and boys like sculptured, olden gods, and men, and the press is full; still the treader waves his hands, he shouts, he laughs and sings and ever cries,

"More, bring me more, the press is not yet full." With redoubled fury he treads and tramples the helpless things till they fling up their beating life in his face. Now his face! look at it! it is stained and streaked. He is a picture of blood. And the wine of this blood makes him mad and drunken in fury. He tramples and he treads till the vats below are full of the crimson stream.

Thus will He, the Christ of God, come forth.

He will come to tread in the winepress.

That winepress! the land of the cloudless sky and the vineclad hills.

The grapes, the bodies of men gathered from the "vine of the earth," that vine that would imitate the true vine of God, that wicked and unspeakable thing of the Devil, his system, his kingdom and masterpiece of lies.

And He will trample them in His fury.

Hark! it is His own word:

"I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments.

"For the day of vengeance is in my heart." Isaiah 63:3.

For it is written:

"Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

"And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

"And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." Revelation 14:18-20.

It is the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

He will tread and trample in His fury till the blood of men shall fill the earth as the juice of the grape the overflowing vats.

He will tread and trample them beneath His accusing feet, till their upspurting blood shall make Him crimson.

Crimson and stained was He that night of the 11th of April, A. D. 32, when they took down His pierced body from the accursed cross.

Crimson and stained were the poor feet as the disciples, amid their blinding tears, straightened them for the silent tomb, on that strange, sad night of the saddest passover of earth.

Crimsoned and stained were His head, His face, His hands, His feet.

Crimson and stained will be all His garments as He treads and tramples and crushes the nations as though mad and drunken in the blind fury of His wrath.

It is HIS STRANGE WORK, HIS STRANGE ACT.

As it is written:

"For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, *his strange work;* and bring to pass his act, *his strange act.*" Isaiah 28:21.

The work of treading and trampling the life blood out of His foes.

It is that hour promised Him of the Father, when His enemies should be made His footstool:

"Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Psalm 119:1.

The hour of the footstool has come.

He treads on it and blood, the blood of men, is the answer to His treading.

His name is KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

He comes to His glory not as the Saviour, meek and lowly, not through the suffrage of willing hearts and the plaudits of a welcoming world, but as a king, an autocrat, a despot, through THE GUSHING BLOOD OF A TRAMPLED WORLD.

Think of it!

He comes from Heaven.

He rises up from the joy and gladness of the marriage feast, from the fellowship of love, of tenderness and grace, and descends swiftly to earth that HE MAY TRAMPLE IT BENEATH HIS FEET IN FURY!

What a portrait!

What an appalling picture!

What an utter recklessness of exegetical folly, to represent the world as having lived through generations of millennial glory and peace before this manifestation of His Presence, His Personal Appearing!

What blind, almost treasonable perversion of the Word of God, and the direct message of the Spirit, to represent a world spiritually enthroned of Christ through the preaching of the Gospel before this hour of the revelation in personal wrath and judgment!

What putting light for darkness, and darkness for light.

What writing in the thought and conception of men, instead of the declaration of God in its naked integrity.

What folly of interpretation, that passes nigh unto foolery, in making the revelation of truth an elastic band to cover the expansive hopes of the flesh, and a shrunken, and unresponsive chord, to bind in bonds the so-called pessimism of the truth.

The portrait proclaims in all its terrible lines that the wickedness and sin of the world previous to His Coming

has culminated in outrage, shame, excuseless deviltry and horror of iniquity; that a blind, brute-swayed world has put on the cap and bells of a clown from the pit, and turned the comedy of life into the tragedy of an infinite hell, till the long-suffering, century-mocked silence and love of God have been turned into the concentrated wrath and fierceness of incarnate judgment.

2. *Consider those who follow this emergent, wrathful King of Heaven.*

They are represented as armies.

They come forth as a body of fighters.

They come forth to assist the Warrior to make war on the earth.

Is THIS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

How completely her complexion has changed!

For all the ages since her Lord left these shores she has been dealing in rare, persuasive grace, binding up the broken hearted and pouring in the healing oil.

Now she comes not as a fair and gentle spouse who seeks to honor her absent Lord and make Him rich in thanksgiving with the ministrations of mercy in His name, but to dispense judgment instead of grace; to make wounds instead of healing them; to give sorrow instead of joy; to fill up the cup of tears to the brim instead of overflowing it with smiles.

She shares the feelings of her Lord.

Her desire, as of all true women, is subject unto that Lord.

It is the picture of a church that has been no more at home, no more popular than her Head; for it is the picture of those who are truly the Lord's; those who have been wholly His, and to whom He has been joined as a husband to the wife of his heart.

It tells the story of the infinite distance between those who are truly of the Lord, and the world that slew Him, and hates Him now.

Behold what this coming Lord and His accompanying saints find on the earth.

Armies gathered together to make war on the Lamb.

This is the end.

This is the attitude of the world!

Organized in open and monstrous rebellion against the King of kings and Lord of lords.

These kings are under the headship of the Beast, a wild beast, not a lamb, not incarnate love, not the spirit of gentleness and peace! It is the wild beast spirit, the devouring, tearing beast. It is the incarnation of that which hates and seeks always to destroy. It is the picture of a world given over to lawlessness, madness and impiety, seeking to dethrone God and cast Him out of His world forever.

Figures! symbols!

Yes! And as consequence only able to give us the shadow of the reality.

A more terrible suggestion of conditions beyond the power of human speech, even when inspired by the Spirit of God, could not be given.

The symbol means the reality is beyond words.

If the symbols are monstrous, who can conceive of the monstrousness of the actual, the real?

It is a wild beast government; a world under the rule of materialism and sensualism at the worst; a world in which man has slipped away from the marrow of the soul, has slipped into the framework of the joints, is held by the lime and the dust of his being, impregnated and moved by Devil, and not by God.

What room is there in such a world for the lion and the lamb to lie down together?

A world in which the wild beast spirit is so uppermost that in order to meet and overcome it the Son of God seems to transform Himself into an all-devouring madness, wild wrath and fury, until of His strange behaviour it is said, it is the "wrath of a Lamb, a little lamb."

3. *Look at the manner of the King's victory.*

Death and destruction to the armies of the Beast-king.

Go back into the prophecy of Zechariah and read the manner of that death.

A plague, a pestilence from the hand of the Lord; so that when these men stand on their feet, their flesh rots away upon their bones, and their eyes consume in their sockets, as it is written:

"And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that fought against Jerusalem [for it is to the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, that our Lord descends]; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouth." Zechariah 14:12.

Look at the end of the Beast-king and the False Prophet, his Prime-minister.

"THESE BOTH WERE CAST ALIVE INTO A LAKE OF FIRE BURNING WITH BRIMSTONE."

Just what Daniel prophesied nearly six hundred years before the vision of Patmos; as it is written:

"I beheld, even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." Daniel 7:11.

The once rejected, but true King, after His resurrection, went *alive up* into Heaven.

This false king and prophet after their rejection by the Lord, shall go *down alive* into Hell.

Over the last act of the world's government is the upleaping flame of smoke and brimstone.

What an ending for this age!

What a commentary on its art, literature, science and philosophy.

What a commentary on that teaching which makes a converted, spirit-filled millennium, before the Lord comes.

4. *What follows this dramatic Coming of the Son of God?*

Let us gaze unhesitatingly into the scene which follows.

Two great things happen.

1. SATAN IS BOUND.

He is bound like a criminal and cast into the lowest dungeon of earth, into the bottomless pit.

The world is no longer his arena.

He has been cast out of the earth.

Once, when our Lord was on the Mount of Transfiguration with Peter, James and John, the rest of the disciples were below, at the foot of the mount. A father brought them his son possessed with a demon. The disciples could not cast him out. They used all the power they possessed, but in vain. At the last the Lord descended and with the simple word of His power cast out the demon and restored the boy to his father's arms.

For twenty centuries the Lord has been up in the mount of Transfiguration in Heaven.

During this time of His absence the sons of men have come to the doors of the church, asking her to cast out the demon, to purify society, to make the world better. To this present hour the church has been unable to respond and cast out the Devil. She has used all sorts of

means, has resorted to all schemes, and the Devil still remains, the "God of this world," still thrones it upon the sons of men.

This picture of the Revelation tells us how the Devil's reign will be broken, how he will be cast down and out.

Not by the legislation of men, the reformation of society, the dreams of socialism, not by the preaching of the Gospel and the all-persuasive power of the Spirit of God, but by the personal Coming of the Lord in judgment.

The binding of Satan and the casting of him out of the earth *follows* the Coming of the Lord.

2. THE KINGDOM OF THE THOUSAND YEARS IS SET UP, THE MILLENNIUM IS NOW BROUGHT IN.

For it is written:

"They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Once the church at Corinth was led to imagine that the reigning time had come in their day, and the Apostle wrote them the keenest satire that ever fell from his pen:

"Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings *without* us: and I would to God ye *did* reign, that we also might reign with you." 1 Corinthians 4:8.

What an absurdity to talk about a reign and a kingdom when the chiefest apostle declares in the following verse, that he and his fellow apostles were made a "spectacle" to the world, to angels, and to men: this word "spectacle" meaning a "comedy."

What a pure comedy it is to teach the setting up of the kingdom while the King himself is away, a refugee upon the throne of Heaven.

"They lived and reigned with Christ a *thousand years.*"

Here is the beginning of the reign announced.

Here is the beginning of the thousand years.

Here is the beginning of the millennium for the first time announced.

The thousand years, the millennium comes into view only after the vision of the descending Christ.

Look at the picture; you will find it has five parts.

1. The coming of the Lord with all His saints in immortal glory.

2. The overthrow of the organized rebellion of the world under Antichrist and the False Prophet.

3. The casting of Antichrist and the False Prophet into the Lake of fire.

4. The binding of Satan for a thousand years under the earth.

5. The coming into view for the first time of the thousand years, the millennial reign of Christ and His church.

If the Millennium comes in after the Coming of Christ, then the Coming of Christ is Pre-Millennial.

And this is the name of the scenic picture painted in the colors of the Spirit in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of the Revelation.

It is a name written in such iridescent colors, writ so large by the hand of the living God that it flashes out in far-sounding accent to the ears of him who is willing to hear "what the Spirit saith to the churches," saying it with an emphasis that leaves no alternative save the contradiction and denial of the Spirit Himself:

THE COMING OF CHRIST, THE LORD, IS PRE-MILLENNIAL.

IMMINENCY AND ATTITUDE

"OF THAT DAY AND THAT HOUR KNOWETH NO MAN, NO, NOT THE ANGELS WHICH ARE IN HEAVEN, NEITHER THE SON.

WATCH YE THEREFORE; FOR YE KNOW NOT WHEN THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE COMETH—

LEST COMING SUDDENLY, HE FIND YOU SLEEPING.

AND WHAT I SAY UNTO YOU, I SAY UNTO ALL, WATCH."—Mark 13:32-37.

CHAPTER XVIII

Imminency and Attitude

Admitting that the Coming of Christ is Pre-Millennial, two questions arise:

1. Is the Coming Imminent? Is Christ coming any moment?

2. What is the attitude of the church? Is she to be looking for a coming Lord, to be in constant expectancy, waiting for His Coming?

Let us hear what the Scriptures have to say.

Let us listen first of all to the recorded testimony of the Son of God.

We turn to Matthew 24: 36-51.

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

"For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark.

"And knew not, until the flood came, and took them all away: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

"Then shall two be in the field: the one shall be taken, and the other left.

"Two women shall be grinding at the mill: the one shall be taken, and the other left.

"Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

"But know this, that if the goodman of the house had

known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

" Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.

" Who then is that faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

" Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

" Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

" But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming;

" And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken:

" The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

" And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

From this statement we learn:

1. The *day* of the Lord's Coming is known to no man.

2. The *hour* of the Lord's Coming is not known.

3. Neither the day nor the hour are known to the angels in Heaven.

4. The Coming of the Lord will be as unexpected as the coming of the flood.

5. It will be as much without previous sign or warning as is the coming of a thief.

6. Because the Lord is coming at an unexpected day

and hour, like the flood, He exhorts the disciples to "WATCH."

7 Because He is coming without previous sign or warning, like the thief, He says: "BE READY."

Turn to Matthew 25: 1-10.

The story is simple enough.

Ten virgins go out to meet a bridegroom.

Five are wise and take oil in vessels as well as in lamps.

Five are foolish and take no extra supply of oil.

Both wise and foolish fall asleep.

At midnight all are aroused by the cry: "Behold, the bridegroom cometh."

The foolish find their lamps going out and wish to borrow oil of the wise.

The wise bid them go and buy for themselves.

While they go to buy, the bridegroom comes, and they that are ready go in with him to the marriage, and the door is shut.

Afterward the foolish ones come but they cannot enter in; the bridegroom professes that he knows them not.

The Lord Himself makes the application:

"WATCH THEREFORE!"

He speaks again in Mark 13: 32-37.

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son,* but the Father.

"Take ye heed, watch and pray: for *ye know not when the time is.*

"For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

"Watch ye therefore; *for ye know not when the master of the house cometh,* at even, or at midnight, at the cock crowing, or in the morning;

"Lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.

"And what I say unto you, I SAY UNTO ALL, WATCH."

1. There is a householder.
2. He has a house.
3. There are servants in the house.
4. Each servant has his place.
5. There is a porter.
6. The householder is going on a "long journey."
7. He will come back.
8. He may return at *even.*
9. He may return at *midnight.*
10. He may return at *cock-crowing.*
11. He may return *in the morning.*
12. He will return *suddenly;* that is, *without warning.*
13. It is possible he may find some of the household sleeping.
14. He says unto all: "WATCH."

The application is as clear as unclouded sunlight falling on an unobstructed plain.

1. The Householder is the Lord.
2. The House, the Church.
3. The Servants, teachers, and, representatively, the whole assembly.
4. The Porter, the Holy Spirit.
5. The Lord has gone on a long journey, into a "far" country, even Heaven.
6. He is coming back.
7. The time while He is away is divided into four periods:

Even.

Midnight.

Cock-crowing.

The morning.

8. Any time after His departure He might have returned in the "even," or the "midnight."

9. He may now return at "cock-crowing," or "in the morning."

10. He will return suddenly, without previous sign, or warning.

11. No man on earth knows either the day or the hour.

12. No angel in Heaven knows.

13. When He was on earth, He Himself did not know.

14. Only the Father knows.

15. What He says to one in the church on earth, He now says to all: "WATCH."

The word means to "KEEP AWAKE."

We get next, Luke 12:35-40.

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning:

"And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he shall return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately.

"Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

"And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

"And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

"Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

1. He is coming back.

2. He might have come in the second or the third watch, at "midnight," or, "cock-crowing."

3. The time of His Coming is uncertain.

4. His Coming will be as much without warning as a slippered thief.

5. The Disciples are to "watch" for His return.

6. They are to watch for it in the time of their earthly life.

7. They are to expect it in *some* hour, and because they know not *what* hour, and because it might be in *any* hour, they are therefore to watch for it *every* hour.

Peter wishes to know whether the application is for himself and the few, or for all.

In response, the Lord returns to the figure of the household.

1. A steward rules over the household.

2. The responsibility of the steward is to give to each his portion of meat in "due" season.

3. The servant who does this will be rewarded by the master of the household when he returns.

4. The steward who has taught the household that the lord has delayed his coming; who teaches that there is "something" between the household and the coming of the master will be cut off when he comes.

He will be cut off, not because he becomes violent or

"drunken," but because he teaches the "delay" of the Lord.

5. The lord will come and cut off that steward in an hour when "he looketh not for him."

The meaning has no lameness in its feet; it comes to us quickly:

1. The Steward over the household is the Teacher, the "Angel" of the church.

2. The meat, the doctrine. Hebrews 5: 12.

3. Providing the portion of meat in "due season," is rightly dividing the word, and faithfully preaching the faith, delivered to the saints.

4. The Teacher who teaches that the Lord "delays" His Coming; that "something" is necessarily between the household of faith and the Coming of the Lord, will be "cut off," excommunicated from the kingdom, when the Lord comes.

5. The Lord will come in an hour when such a teacher "looketh not for him," and will be taken unaware.

If this is not a warning to those who put something between the Church and the Lord which "delays" His Coming; if this is not a warning both to the teachers in the church, and to the church, to be ready for the hour when one thinketh *not,*" then language is simply a collocation of terms which encourages, and then deceives, the imagination.

This is the testimony of the Son of God.

Taking His language grammatically, philologically and morally, as the expression of recognized sincerity, the Lord tells His church that His Coming is possible in some day, some hour; some day, some hour unknown on earth.

So far as the knowledge of those who are on the earth is concerned; so far as any revelation has been given to them, the Coming might be any hour from "even to morn."

An hour is made up of moments; a moment in the hour not designated is "any moment."

As the Lord *is* coming in some undesignated moment, in any hour between the even and the morning, He is coming necessarily, ANY MOMENT.

This is the testimony of the Son of God as to His "imminency."

He is equally clear as to the attitude of the church in respect to it.

He says:

WATCH!

That word has been shown to signify: "KEEP AWAKE."

The exhortation to keep awake is the command to be expecting His Coming at any moment.

He says:

BE READY! and that means: "BE PREPARED" for it is an event likely to happen while you are watching.

This is the commanded attitude of the Church:

"Watch! Keep awake; Be ready! Be prepared for My Coming in some hour unknown to you."

It is an attitude of waiting and readiness in any hour, and for any moment.

Let us listen to the testimony of the Apostle Paul:

1 Corinthians 1:7.

"So that ye come behind in no gift; *waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

To "wait," signifies "to expect."

Paul testifies that the Corinthians were expecting the Lord in their day.

1 Corinthians 15:51, 52.

"Behold, I show you a mystery: *We shall not all sleep,* but we shall all be changed.

"*In a moment,* in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump."

The Apostle says:

1. All Christians will not sleep; that is, all Christians will not die.

2. All who do not die will be "changed."

This transformation will take place at the sound of the trump.

The trump sounds at the Coming of the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

4. Some Christians then will be alive at the Coming of the Lord.

5. Paul says, "We."

He was writing to the church at Corinth, and included them with himself.

6. Paul was expecting that he and the Corinthians would be alive unto the Coming of the Lord.

7. The fact that he and they died is not an evidence that Paul was deceived, or made a "grievous" mistake; on the contrary, it is evidence that he took the Lord at His word concerning an "unknown" hour, and occupied the attitude which that word requires, waiting for the Lord in each day and generation.

8. Paul testifies that this Coming produces the change "in a moment."

The atmosphere of the Coming will be a matter of a moment, any moment, just as swift and unmarked to the knowledge of men.

2 Corinthians 5:1-4:

"For we know, that if our earthly house of this taber-

nacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.

For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

1. The body of a Christian is a tabernacle, a "tent-house."

2. Death takes down the tent.

3. When the tent is taken down, the Christian is assured that he will have another body.

4. This body will not be "hand-made" but constructed by God Himself.

5. It is not *in* heaven as to *location* now, but anticipatively as to *source*.

Heaven will be its final location when the Christian shall be "caught up" to meet the descending Lord.

6. In the present tent body we are "weighed down," we groan. We groan because we are weighed down, held down as tents are held down, to keep them steadfast on the earth.

7. We do not want our tent taken down; for then we should be "unclothed," "naked."

8. What we want is to be "clothed upon" with our house from Heaven; we wish the new body whose source is God in Heaven, to be put upon us.

9. We want this mortal to put on *immortality*.

10. We do not want to die and go *to* Heaven; we want Immortality to come to us *from* Heaven; we want our mortal body to be clothed upon, changed and made immortal.

11. As Immortality, that is to say, a deathless, incorruptible body, can alone come by the Coming of the Lord who produces this "change" at the sound of the trump, then we are yearning for the Coming of the Lord *before we die.*

This is what the Apostle says, speaking in the name of the whole church. And that he is speaking in the name of the whole church, for all time and for this time, is evident from the fact that what he writes to the church at Corinth, he writes to and for "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." 1 Corinthians 1:2.

It is evident furthermore, because he says:

"He that hath wrought us for the *self same thing* is God." 2 Corinthians 5:5.

God hath wrought all Christians for immortality.

Immortality, a deathless, incorruptible body, a body of glory, can come but in two ways: through the resurrection of the dead and "change" of the living at the Coming of the Lord.

The Apostle speaking on behalf of the whole church of all time says:

We do not desire to attain immortality through death and resurrection; WE DESIRE TO ATTAIN IMMORTALITY BY BEING CHANGED, "CLOTHED UPON" WHILE WE ARE ALIVE: AS THIS CHANGE AND CLOTHING UPON CAN TAKE PLACE ONLY AT THE COMING OF THE LORD, THE APOSTLE TESTIFIES THAT THE TRUE ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH IS EARNESTLY TO DESIRE THE LORD TO COME AND PRODUCE THIS CHANGE: AND FURTHERMORE, THAT THE ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH IN GOSPEL ORDER IS WAITING, EXPECTING THE LORD TO COME AND TRANSFIGURE THE LIVING INTO IMMORTALITY AT ANY TIME.

He confirms this testimony in his epistle to the Philippians.

Philippians 3:20, 21.

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ;

Who shall change our vile body [body of humiliation] that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body (body of glory).

1. Our citizenship is in heaven.
2. We have a Saviour in that Heaven.
3. He is coming out of Heaven.
4. He is coming to change his body, *the body of the living,* and make it immortal.
5. Paul was looking for that Saviour in his day.
6. Paul includes himself with the Christians of that day; hence, also, of our day.
7. We are to be looking for, that is, expecting, a Saviour to give us the change unto immortality in our day, while we are yet alive.

The Apostle writes in the same vein to the Thessalonians, the model church of the New Testament.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10, he writes:

"Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God;

And to *wait for his Son from heaven.*"

1. The Thessalonians had turned to God.
2. They turned to God from idols.
3. They turned from the gods without life to serve the living and true God.
4. They turned to serve God *and* to *wait* for His Son from heaven.
5. They were waiting for the Son of God in their day, as though it might take place at any time.
6. Paul's reference to their attitude is a commenda-

tion of them, and because he sets them forth as an "ensample to all that believe," his commendation of them is a recommendation of their attitude to us.

As much as the church at Thessalonica, we are to "wait for the Son of God from heaven" and, of course, "waiting" means *expecting*.

1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

To get the full force of the Apostle's testimony, let us read vs. 13-15.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that WE WHICH ARE ALIVE, AND REMAIN UNTO THE COMING OF THE LORD, shall not prevent [go before] them which are asleep."

1. Christians are not to sorrow over the "dead in Christ," as those who have no hope.

2. Sorrow is not hopeless for such, because the Lord is coming to raise their body and bring them into a state of immortality.

3. He will raise the Christian dead first.

4. Then the sorrowing ones who are al caught up with them to meet the Lord in the

5. Paul is giving this comfort, not to the dead, nor to those whom he expects to die, but to the living, to those who he says will be alive unto the Coming of the Lord.

He says "we."

That "we" which included the Thessalonians with himself and makes it a demonstration that he looked upon it as possible that the Lord, at any time, might descend into the air and "shout" him up alive.

Paul's "we" must include us of to-day; otherwise, we are cut off from the doctrine and promise of the church.

Because his "we" includes us, then we are to comfort ourselves in respect to our Christian dead, that at any time the Lord may come and we shall be among the number who "ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN UNTO THE COMING OF THE LORD." 1 Thessalonians 5:1, 2.

"The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."

1. The day of the Lord is coming.
2. It will begin in the night.
3. It will come like a thief.
4. It will come without warning.
5. It will come without signs.
6. It will come *secretly.*
7. It will begin *invisibly* to the world.
8. It will come before *day-break.*
9. It may come *any time* because it is not fixed for *some time* in the earthly calendar.
10. The Day of the Lord is introduced by the Coming of the Lord.
11. However much the Lord will be revealed in the Day, His Coming to inaugurate the glory of the Day, the inauguration itself, will be in the invisibility symbolized by the "night."
12. Because this Coming of the Lord is thus like the

coming of the thief, at no revealed time in the night, and may therefore be at any time in this spiritual night, the Apostle exhorts the Christian who is of the "Day," and not of the "Night."

He says:

"LET US NOT SLEEP.

LET US WATCH."

In other words, the Apostle exhorts the Thessalonian church, and therefore the Church of to-day, to hold the attitude of waiting for an imminently coming Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5: 17.

"I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Apostle prays for three things.

1. That the spirit, soul and body of the Christian be blameless at the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. That spirit, soul and body be preserved entire; that is, that the trinity of constitution be kept together in the unity of the person.

3. He is praying that at the Coming of Christ spirit, soul and body may not be separated, body in the grave, soul and spirit with the Lord.

4. He is praying, consistently with his uniform testimony that the Lord may come at any time, that the Thessalonians may not die, any of them, before the Lord comes; he is praying that they may, all of them, be preserved alive unto that Coming.

Titus 2: 13.

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

1. The Coming of the Lord is the "Blessed Hope."

2. Titus is to expect its realization in his day.

3. It is as much our hope as his.

4. We, therefore, are to expect it as much in our day as he did in his.

This is the testimony of Paul.

Let us hear the testimony of the Apostle James, the conservative Apostle.

James 5:8, 9.

"The coming of the Lord *draweth nigh.* . . .

The Judge standeth *before the door.*"

1. The Lord is coming.

2. The coming "draweth nigh." The Lord is "before the door," ready to enter in, when it is "opened to him, immediately."

3. The coming of the Lord then is so imminent that it is at our "threshold."

If this is not imminency, then language is a robber on the highway of understanding, stealing away the senses, and paralyzing all dialect of "definition."

Let us hear the testimony of the Son of God after His resurrection and ascension to Heaven.

After His ascension, He descends to the island of Patmos and there meets John, the beloved disciple. He bids him write seven letters to seven churches in Asia. These churches represent the whole church while He is away. Any one of the churches, at any time, represents the whole church while He is away.

To the church at Sardis He writes, Revelation 3:3.

"If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee [arrive over thee]."

1. He is coming.

2. Coming as a thief.

3. He will "arrive over" the church (in the air).

4. Church will not know " what hour " (any hour, any moment).

5. The Church is to watch (every hour, every moment).

Hear Him in Revelation 16: 15.

" Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

In the Temple at Jerusalem there were guards.

These guards were placed at night.

They wore a garment, a robe, a uniform; this robe was the profession they made to be guards.

There was a Captain.

At uncertain and unannounced hours the Captain made his rounds to relieve the watch; sometimes he took one and left another.

When he found one of the guards asleep on his post he took off his robe.

When the guard awoke the Captain had come and gone, had stripped off his profession, made him naked and put him to shame.

The church is a temple. " Know ye not that ye are the temple of God? " 1 Corinthians 3: 1-6.

The Teachers in the church are the guards of the faith once delivered to the saints, and represent the whole assembly in teaching responsibility before God, represent their faith or faithlessness in the testimony they give.

Christ the Lord is the Captain of the temple guards.

He is coming at an unannounced hour to relieve the watch. One will be taken and another left.

Those who have proven faithless will be stripped of their profession.

They will be stripped by being left behind, and like the

foolish virgins shown to have no "oil relation" to the Lord.

They will be naked and ashamed before the bare light of the "Day."

He is coming like a thief to steal not only from the world the treasure it fails to own and recognize to-day, but He is coming to steal from the "professing" church the garment that has under it no "possession."

Because He is coming like a thief to snatch away the mere profession and make it naked to the gaze of judgment He warns all in the church to be on watch, and for each one to keep his garment; that is, to "hold fast" the profession he has made.

If this is not a warning to be ready for imminency, then speech is double tongued, and we should refuse to believe that it ever was on the lips of the Son of God.

The warning given in this chapter is in accord with the one given in the second chapter and the tenth verse:

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Hear now the testimony of the Holy Spirit in respect to imminency.

"And the Spirit says, COME." Revelation 22: 17.

Hear the testimony of the Bride, not the great profession *called the* church, but the Bride, she to whom the Lord, having left Father and Mother, has been "joined."

"The Bride says, COME." Revelation 22: 17.

Let us hear the obligatory testimony of him who hears the Lord's announcement that He is coming:

"Let him that heareth say, COME."

Hear once more and for the last time the testimony of the ascended Lord till He shall actually come again:

"Surely I COME QUICKLY." Revelation 22: 20.

Hear the last prayer of the New Testament.

"EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."

The testimony is all in. The witnesses have spoken.

Christ the Lord. Ante-mortem testimony.

Paul, the depository of the "doctrine" of the church.

James, the conservative Apostle.

Christ the Lord. Post-mortem testimony.

The Spirit—an exhortation to the Lord to come.

The Bride, a longing cry for the Bridegroom.

The Ear that has heard the news that He is coming, a cry to Him to "hasten."

The concentrated Prayer pouring out of the volume of inspiration: "AMEN. EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."

The testimony is a unit in a threefold declaration:

THE COMING OF THE LORD IS IMMINENT.

THE CHURCH IN EVERY AGE IS TO BE READY FOR THE IMMINENCY.

THE CHURCH IS TO HOLD THE ATTITUDE OF WAITING; EXPECTING THE IMMINENCY: THE CHURCH IS TO BE WAITING FOR THE SON OF GOD FROM HEAVEN.

Of course this teaching that the Coming of Christ is imminent, and that the church is to be in the attitude of constant expectation concerning it, is an added, an overwhelming evidence that the Coming of Christ is Pre-Millennial.

If the Coming of Christ is imminent; if the church is to be in the attitude of waiting for it, then a world converted by the Gospel a thousand years before the Coming is an absolute impossibility.

The declaration of the Lord, the corroborative witness of the Apostles and the uniformly commanded attitude of the church, settle and seal beyond all question and controversy, that the Coming of the Lord is Pre-Millennial.

There are those who preach and teach the doctrine of the Pre-Millennial Coming.

They agree most fully that there can be no Millennium till the Lord come; that so far from the church converting the world, the world will convert the church.

No one can outdo them in the demonstration that the Coming of the Lord is Pre-Millennial.

But while admitting that it is Pre-Millennial, *they deny that it is imminent.*

They testify that many events were predicted as certain to take place before the Coming of the Lord.

For example: The death of Peter, the offering up of Paul, the down grade of the church culminating in apostasy, the resurrection of the Roman empire, the return of the Jews and the effectuation of Zionism, the rise of the Antichrist and his impious course, the Great Tribulation, and cognate or co-ordinate events.

To hold up in the face of these clearly predicted events, events which must be fulfilled before the Lord comes, that the Coming itself is imminent, is, so they teach, absurd, full of folly and wholly unwarranted in the Word of God.

The Lord is coming, such is their teaching, sooner or later.

He cannot come sooner than the fulfilment of the predicted events.

The fulfilment of these predictions will take time.

It cannot be to-day.

It cannot be to-morrow.

It cannot be this year.

It cannot be at least for seven years.

It may be many, many years before the accepted seven years can begin.

No Christian, all things being equal, is warranted in

looking for the Lord within a decade; it may be two or ten decades.

No Christian, certainly, is warranted in looking for the Lord to-day.

If he cannot look for Him to-day or to-morrow, or this year, His Coming is not imminent.

If it is not imminent the attitude of the church at this hour is not to wait for it, not to expect it.

Those who preach this doctrine play directly into the hands of the Post-Millennialists.

They are Post-Millennialists in disguise.

They are more dangerous than Post-Millennialists.

You know exactly where to find the Post-Millennialist.

You will find him outside the Word of God; or, you will find him inside the Word, stealing without a blush of compunction the promises made exclusively to the people of Israel, and handing them over to the Church, thus making her the receiver of stolen goods.

You will find him putting the church on the ground of Israel, or leading her on to the ground of the Patriarchs, making common cause with the sons of Jacob, teaching her to call herself "Zion," and mouthing about a "Jewish Church."

You will find him "mixing" law and grace, unable to discern the church, either as to *what* she is or *when* or *where* she began, incapable of understanding the difference between the age of the "Body" and the age of the "Kingdom," while the word "Dispensation," to his consciousness, is as void of light as a night without stars.

The Post-Millennialist has no exegesis.

There is no exegesis in Post-Millennialism.

There is "Seminary" theology, but not "Biblical" theology.

There is the theology that is dictated by Neander, Mosheim and church history in general; not church history brought to the bar of the Bible, but the Bible brought to the bar of church history and interpreted according to the exigencies of a preconceived system.

There is "interpretation," but not "exegesis."

It is easy with an open Bible and "dispensational truth," to "bowl out" a Post-Millennialist.

But the Pre-Millenarian with Post-Millenarian tendencies, who denies the "imminency," comes with the catch word "Pre-Millennial" on his lips.

Those who love the Lord's return are caught by it.

Then the Pre-Millennialist with Post-Millennial tendencies opens his luggage and sets before the unwary Christian a whole assortment of difficulties.

Nothing is so easy to tie up in a handy parcel as the apparent contradictions of Scripture, specially in relation to any doctrine that is not desirable. The Word of God is so delicate, so fine in its affinities, needs to be so carefully related, that the broadest and strongest, the most fundamental doctrines, if not reverently handled may, at times, seem to disturb the balance of truth and cross the lines of thought; again and again, a passage of Scripture contains threads that are woven through distinct dispensations or parts of the same doctrine; to make difficulties with any doctrine is just as easy as throwing stones.

The Pre-Millenarian with Post-Millenarian tendencies does not throw stones, he politely hands over his neatly tied up package labelled, "Certain Predicted Events which must take place before our Lord's return."

Then the average Christian is troubled.

By and by he gives up the "imminency."

For a while he tries to hold the "Hope" in a sort of anticipative way.

He tries by faith to step over into the final generation that shall be alive at the Lord's Coming. He seeks to identify himself with the expectation of that generation, then come back to his own and try to keep a "vivid" impression of the hope that in all probability cannot be realized till long after he has "fallen on sleep."

The effort is too much for him.

By and by he gives up the attempt to make the hope a factor at all.

As the hope fades, the fact of the Coming becomes more and more remote. He presently ceases to talk about what is no longer an upspringing tide from the fullness of the heart.

Then he falls back on the Gospel.

He goes back to the primer of Christianity; he goes back to the a, b, c's.

He takes up the question of prayer.

He becomes occupied with "deepening" (whatever that may mean) the spiritual life.

He diverts himself with European politics.

He is taken up with the "signs of the times."

His strongest force is expressed in the singular vocation of robbing others of the hope he once possessed.

Finally, he confronts the growing certainty that he will die before the Lord comes.

He has "delayed" the Lord's coming.

"By their fruits ye shall know them."

If this kind of preaching can gain headway, it will not be long before the Coming of the Lord as a doctrine, as a present and potent factor in Christian life and teaching, will be set aside.

When it is set aside, Post-Millennialism with its fumbling interpretation and "construction," will have free course and be glorified.

Such preaching raises questions that are fundamental.

1. It raises a question as to the sincerity of the Apostles.

They taught and teach the Coming of the Lord as imminent.

Paul says:

"WE WHO ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN UNTO THE COMING OF THE LORD."

There is no possibility of quibbling with this statement.

He commends the Church that "WAITS FOR THE SON OF GOD FROM HEAVEN."

He sets up the ordinance of the Breaking of Bread, received not from the hands of the disciples, but from the Risen Lord Himself, and bids the Church to show forth the Lord's death, "TILL HE COME."

He says that the ultimate of the Lord's table in his day was the Coming of the Lord.

The Church in which he set up this table and this ultimate, is the church whose epistle is law and order for the church in all places and times; hence he sets the church with its back to the empty grave and its face to the imminent Coming of the Lord.

"Till He come," not till events predicted are fulfilled, that is the watchword.

James says:

"THE LORD IS STANDING BEFORE THE DOOR."

If these men were not sincere they have no place in the church as moral and spiritual teachers.

2. It raises a question as to the knowledge of the Apostles.

Were they sincere but ignorant?

If they were ignorant, their words are words of ignorance; if their words are the result of ignorance, they were not inspired, "God-breathed," therefore not in the "all Scripture," and can have no authority with the Church.

3. It raises a question as to the sincerity of the Son of God.

He said:

"I SAY UNTO ALL, WATCH."

"BE READY."

His last utterance from Heaven is:

"BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY."

He makes His Coming to be the "NEXT THING" for the Christian.

The LAST THING TO WHICH HE DRAWS ATTENTION IS HIS COMING.

HE SETS UP NEITHER TIME NOR EVENT BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE CHURCH.

HE TAKES SPECIAL PAINS TO ASSURE THE CHURCH THAT THERE IS NO ERA OF "REQUIRED DELAY" BETWEEN HIMSELF AND HER: HE USES A WORD WHICH FROM THE EARLIEST DAYS OF CLASSIC GREEK SIGNIFIES "WITHOUT DELAY." THAT IS THE MEANING OF THE WORD "QUICKLY." WHEN THEREFORE, HE SAYS: "BEHOLD, I AM COMING" (FOR HE USES THE PRESENT TENSE) HE SAYS ACTUALLY, "I AM COMING WITHOUT DELAY." IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO USE LANGUAGE WHICH COULD MORE ADEQUATELY, AND WITHOUT RESERVE, TEACH THE DOCTRINE OF IMMINENCY AND LEAD THE CHURCH TO HOLD THE RESPONSIVE ATTITUDE OF MOMENTARILY WAITING FOR IT.

Was He insincere?

To ask the question is to play with fire, dangerously play with it!

To ask the question is to answer it like lightning.

Whatever else, He was *sincere*.

He believed, Himself, what He said.

4. It raises a question as to the knowledge of the Son of God.

Was He ignorant?

He did *not* know what hour He would come!

But that lack of knowledge was not ignorance, but because the Father had "put the hour within His own power," according to the covenant of Godhead and the Son's relation to the eternal purpose; anticipatively, in the mystery of the divine wisdom, it was a barrier against those who would take "times and seasons" out of the Father's hand and wrench the "imminency" from the heart and hope of the church.

Any preaching which denies the testimony of the Apostles, impeaches their sincerity, questions the integrity of the Son of God, or lays Him open to revision, carries its own condemnation.

It is time to protest against a Pre-Millennialism which denies the Imminency.

It is time to label it with the title it deserves:

"A device of Satan."

THE COMING OF CHRIST IS BOTH PRE-MILLENNIAL AND IMMINENT.

Imminency does not deny certain predicted events which must be fulfilled before Christ, the Lord, can come WITH His church.

It does deny FIXITY in predicted events in relation to

the church corporately and individually ere He comes FOR His church.

It puts the predicted events which relate to the church in the same category with the predicted, but UNFULFILLED prophecy of the DEFINITELY FIXED prediction of the destruction of Nineveh.

"Yet *forty* days, and Nineveh *shall* be overthrown." Jonah 3: 4.

Forty days, and Nineveh was *not* overthrown; not because God fails to keep faith with His prophecies, but because of a CONTINGENCY in the will and purpose of God at the very time of the prediction; that which overruled in respect to Nineveh; that which had right of way over the destruction, was the *contingency of repentance.*

Imminency makes all predicted events this side of the Second Coming of our Lord contingent on the Lord's coming FOR His church.

The COMING FOR THE CHURCH, LIKE REPENTANCE IN THE PREDICTED OVERTHROW OF NINEVEH, HAS THE RIGHT OF WAY OVER ANY PREDICTIONS WHICH WOULD "DELAY" IT, AND IS ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD.

The distinction between WITH and FOR is not without a difference.

Men who do not see the difference fail because they do not discern *what* and *when* the Church is.

Teachers who make the Church to exist before Christ Himself builds it, before the "foundation is laid," who put the nation of Israel inside of it and talk of the "Jewish Church," are incapable of seeing the distinction.

To argue with such is as useless as it would be to build a highway on a fog bank, or tie up a parcel with a rope of sand.

And yet,

The distinction is logical, because in "the nature of things."

It is in the nature of things, because Scriptural.

Let us examine the Scripture concerning it.

ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ

THE TWO-FOLD COMING AND THE IMMINENCY

"BEHOLD, I COME AS A THIEF. BLESSED IS HE THAT WATCHETH."—Revelation 16:15.

"AS THE LIGHTNING SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE."—Matthew 24:27.

"UNTIL THE DAY DAWN, AND THE DAY STAR ARISE."—2 Peter 1:19.

"I AM THE BRIGHT AND THE MORNING STAR."—Revelation 22:16.

"UNTO YOU [ISRAEL] SHALL THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ARISE."—Malachi 4:2.

"WE SHALL BE CAUGHT UP TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR."—1 Thessalonians 4:17.

"THE LORD MY GOD SHALL COME, AND ALL THE SAINTS * * * AND HIS FEET SHALL STAND IN THAT DAY UPON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES."—Zechariah 14:4, 5.

"SURELY I COME QUICKLY."—Revelation 22:20.

"EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."—Revelation 22:20.

ΕΠΙΦΑΝΕΙΑ

CHAPTER XIX

The Two-fold Coming and the Imminency

The Scriptures teach that while the coming of Christ is one great event, it has two distinct parts or stages.

There is one stage in which the Lord comes *for* His church; another, in which He comes *with* His church.

This two-fold Coming is represented, and intensely taught, all through Scripture.

It is woven into its warp and woof.

It is in accord with the fundamental law of two-foldedness everywhere manifested in revelation.

It is set forth in the types.

A type is a stroke, a picture, which fits and illustrates even to details, a coming event or a statement of doctrine.

Enoch was a historic fact, he is a living person, and his story predicts, as it illustrates, one stage of the Second Coming.

Enoch was called of God.

He walked with Him three hundred years in an age of growing iniquity, and under the prophecy of coming judgments on a godless world.

Suddenly, without previous warning, either to himself or the world in which he walked, he was translated from earth to Heaven.

The Church, like Enoch, has been called of God.

She is called to walk in fellowship with a rejected Lord, in an age of spiritual darkness, growing materialism, rank unbelief and downright sin, with the certainty of coming judgments against a Christ-rejecting world. Suddenly, without previous warning, either to herself or the world wherein she walks, and exactly like Enoch, she

will be "caught up" into the air to meet her returning Head, her Lord and her God.

Noah, dispensationally, is a type of the earthly people Israel, carried through the flood waves of the Great Tribulation and through judgments into the new and coming age.

He is also a type of the individual, called out of the world of the first creation, carried through the judgment of the cross, and put into the new creation in the Second Man.

But Noah is more than this: he is in principle the illustration of the two-foldedness of that Coming which shall inaugurate the Day of judgment.

Without previous warning Noah was called into the ark and the door was shut.

The world did not know the summons from Heaven had come till the elect family had disappeared from sight.

The world went on marrying and giving in marriage, eating and drinking in unbroken serenity and lustful gratification.

Then the heavens and the earth answered to the voice of the Lord, the wrathful storm broke and the judgment fell, sweeping the workers of iniquity away.

There were two parts to this tremendous event.

The secret taking away of the number eight family (the chosen, the select, the resurrection family) and the outward downpour, the lightning flash and judgment.

While the world is given over to its daily feast; while it eats and drinks and multiplies the flesh, suddenly, without previous warning or sign, the church will be called into the "place prepared," and the door will be shut.

The world will not know the "door in Heaven" has been opened, that the summons to "come up hither" has

sounded in her ears, and that the church has gone to be with her Lord, till she has disappeared from sight.

Still will the world eat and drink, yield to desire, covet the things of others, and yearn that to-morrow shall be as to-day and much more abundant.

Then the heavens will open.

The Lord will utter His glorious voice. Deep shall call unto deep. The mountains shall bend and flow down as the waves of the sea, all the earth shall kneel in His presence, burn in His anger, and be drowned under the fire of His indescribable wrath.

Thus there will be the secret taking away of the resurrection family, the family of the eighth day, and the outward and open rush of the swift avenging Lord in judgment.

Lot was a worldly, unspiritual follower of God.

He looked towards Sodom. He pitched his tent towards Sodom. He entered into Sodom. He dwelt in Sodom. He bought, he sold, he builded in Sodom. He became an office bearer and "sat in the gate" of Sodom. He vexed his righteous (not spiritual) soul every day with the filthy conversation of the wicked in Sodom. At last, he lost his testimony in Sodom.

Then the Lord sent His angels and "snatched" him out of Sodom in the "early morning," before the day fully broke, but nearer sunrise than star-rise.

Then the flaming, fiery judgment fell on Sodom.

Before the judgment fell the Lord had given testimony that He could do nothing against Sodom till Lot was brought out of it.

Lot, unfaithful, unspiritual as he was, held back the judgment from a guilty Sodom.

The church has a side, like Lot, worldly, unspiritual,

and yet regenerate of God. A side that lives in the world, is mixed up with its ways; a side, too, that like Lot repudiates the uncleanness of the world and seeks to make it better; a side of the church that tries to purify politics, establish temperance and regulate society; in short, a class in the church that tries day and night to "purify the flesh," and make the doomed Sodom world the abode of decency and morals.

This is that part of the church the eyes of whose understanding have never been opened.

But the church is not divided, it is one whether it be Bride or Body; whether it have in it the Christian walking in the flesh like Simon, or the Christian walking under law like James; the Christian standing in doctrine like Paul, or walking in love like John and having visions of "things to come."

This whole church, suddenly, in the morning before sunrise, like Lot, will be "laid hold on" by the power of God and snatched out of the world.

Then, in flaming might, the fiery judgment will fall, burning up all the wealth, the culture, the sin of the Sodom world, and all the good works of righteousness, all the beautiful "settlement" syndicates of "fair show" in the flesh, so expensively established by the church.

Like Lot, THE CHURCH MUST BE SNATCHED OUT OF THE WORLD BEFORE THE JUDGMENT FALLS.

Like Lot, THE CHURCH, SO LONG AS SHE IS IN IT, HOLDS BACK JUDGMENT FROM THE WORLD.

There must be the first stage, the taking away from judgment, secretly.

There must be the second stage, the Coming in flaming fire, taking vengeance.

Joseph was rejected of his brethren, cast into the pit

without water, taken out alive and driven as a refugee into Egypt.

In Egypt he was exalted to a place on the throne by the side of the king.

He took a bride from among the Egyptians, and thus became Jewish lord to a Gentile woman.

He took his bride and placed her on the throne with himself before the hour of famine and tribulation came upon his brethren.

While his brethren were suffering the famine, the stress of the times and the judgment he was putting on them, his bride was safe above all sorrow and trouble in the king's palace, in the " house of the high places."

When he had finished his judgment on his brethren and " sealed " them as his with the kiss, he went forth (as was the custom, with his wife) in chariots of glory to meet the house of Jacob in the promised land of Goshen.

Thus in the coming of Joseph there are two distinct stages.

He comes for his bride and takes her into the palace, into the place prepared for her, before the famine and tribulation break on his brethren.

He comes with her in manifested glory after the " tribulation in Israel " to meet the family of Jacob in the promised land.

The Greater Joseph was rejected of His brethren after the flesh, cast into the pit without water (Hades), taken out " alive " and driven as a refuge into a " far " country which is Heaven.

He is now seated on His Father's throne.

During the time of session on the Father's throne He is calling out from among the Gentiles a bride for His name, the Church.

Before the Tribulation, "the Great one," comes upon His brethren, He will take the church, as His bride under the first espousals, into the "heavenly places" in association with Himself on the throne.

While the Jews are passing through the stress of times, "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be," the church will be safe above all sorrow in the "place prepared."

When He has finished the dealing with His brethren and sealed them with His seal, He will come forth with the church, His wife under the second espousals, in chariots of glory to the Promised Land.

Two-foldedness is the teaching here, both in type and antitype; they fit each other in the law of the analogue as hand and glove, and each bears conclusive witness of the other.

Two-foldedness is the thought which leaps along all the lines proclaiming the Coming of our Lord.

The symbols proclaim it.

The morning star is a symbol.

The rising sun is a symbol.

The morning star comes before the sun.

It gives no shattering, awakening signs of its coming.

It comes at the hour when the night is disputing with the morn.

It comes when all the lowlands are in depths of darkness, when the mountain peaks stand out against a tremulous sky, and the myriad stars seem like the eyes of watchers waiting for the dawn.

It descends with noiseless softness towards the sleeping earth, like a golden lamp let down by an invisible chain.

It poises itself for a brief moment on the rim of the

night and the rim of the morning, like a note of unuttered song.

It quivers there for a space as though it were a tear from the eye of God, sorrowing that so many should sleep and miss the one transition hour from darkness into light.

It disappears and the earth seems full of a strange hush.

Then there are mists that rise like wraiths above the streams.

Shadows and shapes come and go.

Voices are calling to each other.

Things are in motion and undefined.

The star has come and gone and the interval between the star and the sun is on.

The sun comes after the star has gone.

He comes like one who has a bow, and he goes forth conquering and to conquer.

He shoots his gleaming arrows upward and they fall slanting into the eyes of men and waken them.

All the heavens own the coming.

They turn into rose and amber and purple of amethyst; they flame and flash, they seem to swoon in glory till the edge of Heaven and the edge of the earth melt into one undefined, shivering, unequal line of splendor; all the land is flooded and drowned in light, and every mountain, every valley is disclosed.

The world and all that is therein know that the Lord of the Day has come.

The coming of the day has been one, but the manner of its coming has been two.

These symbols have been applied by divine authority to the Coming of Christ.

His Coming is compared to the morning star.

Hear His own Word:

"I am the bright and morning star." Revelation 22: 16.

He will come like that bright and morning star.

He will come while the night of sin is disputing with the morn of holiness and truth.

He will come when all the low places of the earth are in deepest darkness; when the mountain heights of human pride stand out in their self-appointed majesty against an awakened and thrilling Heaven, while the eyes of unseen and uncounted angels wait for the dawn.

He will descend in noiseless softness as the still-descending star, towards the earth that sleeps in blind indifference to His looks of love.

He will wait a brief space between the midnight and the morn.

He will call, but it will be unheard save by those who have walked in His reflected light and owned His name.

Then He will withdraw as the morning star seems to fade away, and the interval between star-rise and sun-rise will be on.

His Coming is compared to the sunrise.

Hear the words of the prophet:

"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Malachi 4: 2.

He will come, a bow will be given unto Him, and He shall go forth conquering and to conquer.

There will be the "light of his arrows and the shining of his glittering spear."

His judgments will shoot athwart the earth, piercing the sons of men till they cry out to the rocks and the mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face

of Him, whose countenance shineth as the sun in his strength.

All the heavens will own His Coming.

They shall turn into pavilions of splendor.

The glory of color shall be beyond the naming of names.

Over all shall be the gleaming of the " terrible crystal."

Underneath, the clouds shall be the dust of His feet.

The glance of His eye shall be as the brandishing of swords, and the looks of His anger shall be as the burning of worlds.

The great and the small, the mean and the mighty, shall be openly known; those who have passed for men and those who have passed for women, multitudes who have passed for human, will be seen to be but different broods of the same serpent, that old serpent which is the Devil and Satan.

Every secret sin shall throw off its clothing and stand stripped and naked till every eye in Heaven, in earth and hell, shall see sin in all its cancerous, leprous, filth-begetting shamelessness and putrid rottenness; where every outline is a lie, every fibre a deceit, every beat of the heart a trick and all the pulses a smothering flow of hot, fetid lust, each inclination to wickedness giving birth to a thousand concepts of unspeakable debauchery and denial of God.

He shall rise with healing in His wings.

Aye!

But the healing shall be the health of fire consuming iniquity, the fire that leaves neither root nor branch of evil.

The world and all that is therein shall know that the God of the Day has come.

The Coming of the Christ of God will be but one coming, but the manner thereof will be two.

It will be as star-rise and sunrise.

The Coming of Christ is compared to the coming of a thief in the night.

It is compared to the lightning that flashes from one end of Heaven to the other.

The thief comes between the midnight and the morn.

He comes with softest tread, without noise, without light, without warning, and he comes to rob.

He comes to steal away the jewel of great price.

Men are unaware of the event till he has come and gone and the precious jewels have disappeared with him.

The Lord Himself says that He will descend like a thief.

Therefore He will come with softest tread, without noise, without light, and He will come to rob.

He will come to steal away a great jewel, the pearl of "great price," the Church.

The world will not know that He has come till the church has disappeared.

The Coming of Christ is compared to lightning.

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:27.

Lightning reveals the heavens and all the earth below.

Its coming is with the voice of many thunders.

Every eye sees! every ear hears.

All know that the Lord of the earth is abroad in His might.

As the lightning so shall also the Coming of the Son of man be.

The sound of His voice shall be as the thunder, and as the sound of many waters.

Every ear shall hear and every heart shall quake.

His glance shall be as the forked lightnings that dart across the bared bosom of the illumined sky.

The air shall be sulphurous with the weight of His anger, and whithersoever He turns the lightnings will follow.

All shall know from the least to the greatest that the Lord, the living God, hath risen up to the prey.

The thief comes in order before the lightning.

A thief comes not when every flash may reveal him; he comes not when every thunder crash awakes a new witness to identify him.

There is but one Coming, but two-fold and as distinct in manner, as the coming of a thief is distinct from the coming of the lightning.

This two-fold Coming is set forth by two Greek words.

ἐπιφανεία, epiphaneia.

παρουσία, parousia.

Parousia occurs twenty-four times in the New Testament.

It comes from a verb which means to be "at hand," "to be present."

The noun signifies "Presence."

Epiphaneia is to be found six times.

It comes from a word which signifies "to appear," "to manifest."

The noun is "manifestation," "brightness."

Both words occur in a notable verse:

"Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall de-

stroy with the *brightness* (epiphaneia) of his *coming* (parousia)."

Actually translated the verse reads:

"THE MANIFESTATION OF HIS PRESENCE."

He *can* manifest His presence, and manifest it with a brightness above the noon-day sun.

Yonder, on the mount of Transfiguration, He suddenly shone before His disciples till the midnight became as the midnoon of a cloudless sun; yonder, above the road to Damascus, so close to Paul and unseen, then shining out till the glory of the shining blinded him and made him fall from his horse prone in the dust of the highway; yonder at Patmos when He appeared unto John and so blazed forth in the manifestation of His presence that the disciple fell at His feet as one dead with the weight of the glory.

He can be present and yet unmanifested, as yonder at the foot of the golden ladder Jacob slept with a stone for a pillow and awakening, cried out:

"Surely the Lord *is* in this place, and I knew it not." Genesis 28: 16.

The manifested and unmanifested presence of the Lord.

The Lord present and no one aware of it; then suddenly revealed and every eye beholding Him.

This is the teaching of the two words, *epiphaneia* and *parousia*.

As these two words are both applied to the Second Coming; as this great event is spoken of both as *His epiphaneia* and *His parousia*, and the difference between seen and unseen, between manifested and unmanifested is absolute; as they are two things as well as one, two things as to *manner* and capable of being applied to the

same thing as a fact; as both *are* applied to the fact of His Coming, then the Coming of Christ has two distinct parts; one part in which He is manifested; another part in which He is unmanifested.

The two words stamp and seal with the authority of inspired philology, the doctrine that the Coming of Christ, while one great event, has two separate parts.

Not only is the two-fold Coming of Christ taught by types, figures, symbols and specially inspired words, it is also taught by a direct and special revelation from Heaven.

Paul receives this revelation "in a word of the Lord" and writes the same to the church at Thessalonica.

He writes:

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

"Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord *in the air.*"

Paul here declares that the Lord will descend into the air.

In the prophet Zechariah the Lord is represented as descending to the earth:

"Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

"And his feet shall stand in that day *upon the mount of Olives.*"

The Apostle and the prophet are both speaking of the same immense event, the Second Coming of our Lord.

Each speaks of a different part.

Paul speaks of the descent of the Lord *into the air.*

The prophet speaks of His descent *on down to the earth.*

In the very nature of the case He must come into the air *before* He comes down to the earth.

That which is before another thing is *first.*

The coming into the air then is first; as the coming into the air is first, the coming down to the ground must be second.

As they both refer to the Second Coming, they must be parts of the Second Coming; they are therefore the first and second parts of the Coming.

The Second Coming of Christ then has two parts; the first part is into the air, the second part is down to the mount of Olives.

It requires very little effort to see that in the first part the Lord comes to His "saints"; it requires no more effort to see that in the second part He comes to the "nations."

It is plain enough that in the first part He comes *for* His Church; it is equally plain that in the second part He comes *with all His saints.*

The event is one.

The stages are two.

The two stages are as distinct as "the air," and "the mount of Olives."

The two-fold coming is fully set forth in Saint Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians.

There were troublers about the Second Coming then as there are now.

The Apostle writes:

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on

them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

"WHEN HE SHALL COME TO BE GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS." 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.

The Apostle speaking by the Spirit here says three things:

1. The Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire.

2. In that flaming, fiery revelation He will punish the ungodly and the disobedient.

3. This revelation in fire and the punishment of the ungodly and the disobedient will take place when the Lord *shall come* to be glorified in His saints.

According to the present translation the Apostle appears to make the statement of the last proposition.

But he only appears to do so. He does not actually do so.

The correct rendering of the Greek form of the word he uses will make it very clear what he actually says.

The verb rendered in the future, "shall come," is the subjunctive aorist, and requires to be translated:

"SHALL HAVE COME."

The Apostle then says the Lord will be revealed from Heaven in flaming fire, and will punish those who do not know God and who do not obey the Gospel, WHEN HE SHALL HAVE COME TO BE GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS.

That is to say, necessarily:

AFTER HE HAS COME AND HAS BEEN GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS.

Thus the statement of the Apostle is simplified into two propositions:

1. The Lord is coming with His mighty angels in flaming fire to punish those who know not God and obey not the Gospel.

2. He is coming in this revelation of fire from Heaven, AFTER HE HAS COME AND BEEN GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS.

The Apostle therefore teaches that there is a Coming to be glorified in the saints before there is a Coming to punish the ungodly and the sinner.

There is a Coming to be glorified in the saints before there is a revelation in fire.

A Coming to be glorified in the saints!

There is only one way in which Christ can be glorified in His saints at His Coming; and that is, according to the Apostle Paul, by "the redemption of the body." Romans 8:23.

The redemption of the body is by the resurrection of the dead and the transfiguration of the living.

Paul has testified in his previous epistle that this resurrection of the dead saints and the transfiguration of the living takes place when the Lord descends into the air.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, therefore, is a picture of *Christ coming to be glorified in His saints.*

The Revelation in fire comes after the glorification of the Lord in His saints; and is a second part of the Coming. As the second part of the Coming is the descent of the Lord with all His mighty host, according to Zechariah, to the mount of Olives, this revelation from Heaven in flaming fire of which Paul testifies, is precisely the same revelation of which the prophet speaks.

If in the first epistle to the Thessalonians the Apostle

sets before us the first part of the Coming of the Lord, in this passage under consideration in the second epistle (*2* Thessalonians 1:7-10) he sets before us *both* the stages or parts of the one Coming.

1. The Coming of the Lord to be glorified in His saints.

2. The coming in flaming fire with all His saints to punish the ungodly and the disobedient.

But not only so!

The Coming to be glorified in the saints takes place before the Lord is "REVEALED FROM HEAVEN." Verse 7.

To be revealed in flaming fire is to be *visible to the world.*

Any coming before that revelation must be *invisible to the world.*

Thus Paul teaches, not only that the Coming of Christ has two distinct stages, but that *the first stage is invisible to the world.*

He teaches that there is a secret and an open coming.

In this the Apostle agrees with, coincides with, and corroborates the testimony of the Lord, that there is a part of His Second Coming which is as the coming of a thief.

As the fiery revelation cannot be the part in which the Lord comes as a thief, then His thief-like Coming must be the first part, the part where He descends into the air for His church.

When the Lord, therefore, comes for His church,

HIS DESCENT INTO THE AIR WILL BE LIKE A THIEF AND INVISIBLE TO THE WORLD.

The Apostle emphasizes these two parts in the following chapter.

"Now we beseech you brethren, by the *coming* of our

Lord Jesus Christ, and by *our gathering together unto him.*" 2 Thessalonians 2: 1.

The Apostle beseeches by two things.

1. By the Coming of the Lord.

The word "coming," is "parousia."

2. By our gathering together unto Him.

This gathering together unto Him is precisely what the Apostle has taught in the previous epistle:

"We shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air." 1 Thessalonians 4: 17.

The Apostle then in the second epistle gives a distinctive title to the first part of the Coming; it is, "Our gathering together unto Him."

The second epistle gives us two distinct titles for both parts.

1. The first part is, "OUR GATHERING TOGETHER UNTO HIM." 2 Thessalonians 2: 1.

2. The second part, "REVEALED FROM HEAVEN." 2 Thessalonians 1: 7.

We may now go back and in the light of this testimony read Colossians 3: 3, 4.

"For ye are dead [ye died] and your life is hid with Christ in God.

"When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

The Church is to appear *with* Christ in glory; from what we have learned, it is necessary that the church, as a church, shall be caught up to meet the Lord, shall be gathered together unto Him.

The thought of secrecy, invisibility, in the first part of the Coming, is taught in the statement that so far as this old creation is concerned, we "died," and our life is now hidden with the Head of the new creation, in God.

That is our standing before God now, "*Hidden.*"

That is the standing of the Church, she is hidden, as to her real estate, from the world.

She will only come out from this hiding when she appears with the Lord in glory.

This is the thought in the Apostle John:

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be." 1 John 3:2.

There can be no appearance, no manifestation of the church this side of the revelation *from* Heaven.

To make the going up of the church as a body to meet the Lord, open and public, would be to destroy the whole structure of doctrine concerning the Church.

The final testimony as to the two-fold Coming of Christ is set before us scenically and demonstratively in the book of the Revelation.

In the first chapter of the Revelation we have the things which John *saw.*

In the second and third chapters we have "the things that are now"; that is, the history of the professing church while the Lord is away.

Then we come to the fourth chapter.

There we find twenty-four elders seated on thrones and crowned.

In the fifth chapter the Elders testify that they have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb out of every nation, people, kindred and tongue.

These kingly and priestly elders represent the church of Christ.

They are there not as spirits but as embodied beings.

They are there because in the fourth chapter a door in Heaven was opened and a voice like a trumpet (the resurrection and transfiguration trump) bade them "Come up hither."

In the fifth chapter the church sings the songs of redemption and rule, anticipating the moment when she will go forth with the Lord to set up the promised kingdom on the earth.

Chapters fourth and fifth correspond exactly with 1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17.

In the fifth chapter the church stands with her Lord on the threshold of the hardening judgments about to break on the earth.

From the fifth chapter to the nineteenth, there are fourteen chapters.

In these twice seven chapters we have an account of the hardening judgments of God against the earth, and the course of the Great Tribulation.

The seals are broken, the judgments follow.

Trumpets are blown.

Vials of wrath are poured out.

The Antichrist arises.

He runs his terrific course.

We see two companies. A sealed company of Israel, an elect number, and a multitude of Gentiles that no man can number.

Not once is the word "church" found written in any of these chapters.

Never is the thought of the church even hinted.

We read through the awful lines. We gaze at the terrible spectacle.

We hear the crash of heavens, the quaking of the earth, the moan of the sea, opening of the pit, the coming forth of demons, we see the leering face of the son of Perdition, the peering face of his father, the Devil.

Not once in all this do we catch the shadow of the church.

Always we hear a voice bidding us note the difference between the "dwellers in Heaven" and the "dwellers on the earth."

In the thirteenth chapter we are told that these "dwellers in Heaven" are the tabernacle of God.

The tabernacle of God is the church. "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Ephesians 2:22.

The church as the tabernacle of God is dwelling in Heaven while the Antichrist is raging in blasphemy below.

"And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and [omit *and*] THEM THAT DWELL IN HEAVEN." Revelation 13:6.

We get to the nineteenth chapter.

We hear the sound of marriage bells.

We learn that the Lamb has a bride, and that the hour of full marriage has come.

The Bride is the Tabernacle.

The Tabernacle is composed of the dwellers in Heaven.

The dwellers in Heaven are the twenty-four elders.

These twenty-four elders are the warriors on white horses who come out of Heaven, following their Lord.

A Bride, a Tabernacle, Dwellers in Heaven, Kings and Priests, Living creatures, Enthroned elders, an Army on horses?

Yea! and Amen!

The church always follows the transformations of her Lord.

When He is rejected, she has no home on the earth and is but a "pilgrim and stranger," "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake."

When He is the risen One, she is "seated in Heavenly places" in Him. When He is the Bridegroom, she is the Bride. When He is a King, she is a company of kings. When He comes forth as a man of war, she is an army of warriors.

Whatever may be the form, always after the fourth chapter you find her in Heaven.

You see her in the fourth and fifth chapters in Heaven. You get a glimpse of her in the thirteenth chapter in Heaven. In the nineteenth you see her in Heaven.

Take a searchlight. Take all suns and moons and stars, break the rim of the Milky Way and pour the packed light of its infinite depths of light into every crevice of the time below; search every path on earth in mountains and valleys, in cities and towns, the near and the far, between the fourth chapter where she goes up into Heaven and the nineteenth chapter where she comes down from Heaven, and you can find no trace of her on earth, or amid the things of earth.

No! the more you search the more clear it will become that between the "open door" through which she passes into Heaven, and the "open door" through which she comes forth with her Lord from Heaven, there is a distinct interval in which history on earth is marked by her absence.

The more you study this wide painting of the Apocalypse the more clear it will become that there is a going up of the church into Heaven, the interval of absence from the earth, and the coming down again.

The more you pour on the light the more plainly it will be revealed that there is a coming *for* the church and a coming *with* the church.

The more you study the fourteen chapters of the in-

terval between the fifth and the nineteenth, the more it will be evident that a faithful Lord has kept His promise to deliver her from the hour of temptation coming on the earth; and that if He comes for her in secret faithfulness and love, He will keep her above the storm in the place prepared, that He may bring her forth again to share the peace that follows the departing storm.

The tremendous movement of the scene from the fourth chapter to the nineteenth is the high and lifted declaration that while the Coming has these two stages and the unspeakable break between, the Coming itself is but one event.

The thesis abides:

The Coming of Christ while one event has two distinct stages: a first stage in which He comes *for* His church, a second stage in which He comes *with* His church.

The examination of Scripture leaves no room to question the proposition.

The first stage of the Coming of Christ has to do in general with the dead saints of all ages, and exclusively, with the living church alive at His coming.

The first part of the Coming is imminent.

It is imminent because:

1. The church is not a time thing.

She is neither of time or earth.

She was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.

She is seen of God now as already risen and seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

That is her position before God.

OUTSIDE OF TIME AND OUTSIDE OF EARTH.

In eternity, unbegun and unending.

In Heaven, above earth and all its history.

That which is above earth and time can be held by neither.

To put the church under bonds to time and history is to deny her as the risen and ascended one, bring her down to the earth, cut off her relation to eternity, and stamp her as of the passing flesh, and no more.

No prophecy that concerns time can be binding on the church, either corporately or individually; to bind her with times, seasons or events, is as useless as the green withes that bound a Samson.

To insist on *fixity* for the church in time is to cut off both ends of eternity from her and make her a temporal thing, tossed on the wave of the breaking years.

Oh! no!

The first stage then is imminent because there is no time gauge to hold her from a yearning Lord.

The first stage is imminent because:

2. Every prophecy made in time concerning the church (before the second stage can be reached) is contingent on the promise of the Lord to come in an unknown hour with His thief-like step.

This contingency of the unknown Coming,

This contingency of the thief-like Coming,

This contingency of the morning star Coming, have the RIGHT OF WAY OVER ALL THINGS THIS SIDE OF COMPLETE REDEMPTION.

Peter will die, Paul will go to Rome, he will be "offered up," false teachers will arise, Thyatira and Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea will become full blown—if, *if*, IF THE LORD DOES NOT COME FOR HIS CHURCH LIKE THE THIEF IN THE NIGHT.

A thief disregards all the regulations and the rules made ***concerning the household during the night.***

As a thief, the first part of the Coming will disregard every prophecy, every predicted event made *concerning the Household of faith in this deepening spiritual night.*

There is a *fixed* interval between the first stage and the second.

Between us and the first stage there is no fixed interval.

There are no fixed events.

Not one thing that is not contingent.

Between us and the second stage there is a fixed interval of at least seven years (Daniel's seventieth week).

In this fixed interval the Spirit of God places all the fixed events which are to find their fulfillment and climax at the Appearing and glory.

The Church stands related to the first stage.

Israel to the second.

Israel is to be looking for "signs."

Signs! signs! signs!

Signs in the Heavens!

Signs in the earth!

Signs in the sea!

Signs under the sea; from the depths of the underworld whose threshold is under the sea!

Israel is to be looking for the sign of the Son of man in Heaven for His appearing as Messiah and King.

THE CHURCH IS NEVER TO BE LOOKING FOR SIGNS!

Never! never! never!

How can she look for signs?

Did it never occur to you that the church has no natural eyes with which to look for signs?

How can she look to the heavens or the earth if she has no natural eyesight?

Surely you know that the church does not walk by sight.

Have we been hearing all these years that solemn and yet magnificent declaration of natural blindness on the part of the church and not owning it as a fact whose value reaches into the infinite?

Hearken unto it:

"FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT." 2 Corinthians 5:7.

We cannot walk by faith *with* SIGHT; that is impossible; only as we become naturally blind can we walk by faith.

Faith *is* eyesight!

True! but it is eyesight for seeing things that do not exist in the vision of nature.

The Church has no need for the "vision of nature."

She has no need to bind up the daily newspaper with her Bible.

She has no need to send special reporters to Russia, or Japan, or the islands of the sea.

It is not necessary to have a calendar hung up in her meeting houses, whereby she may see how near or far is the Coming of her Lord.

The church is not to be looking for signs.

Nay! she is to be waiting for a SOUND.

A sound! a sound! a sound!

Aye! she is to be waiting for *three* sounds that shall be as *one:*

The Shout of the Lord.

The Voice of the archangel.

The Sounding of the Trump.

The Church is not to be waiting for the *Brightness* of His Presence, but for the *Presence;* not for the *Glory,* but the Lord *Himself.*

The Church is to be waiting for the first stage of the Coming.

The church is never to be "gazing up into Heaven."

Neither gazing into Heaven above nor into time schemes below.

The angels asked the disciples the warning question: "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" Acts 1:11.

They assured them the Lord was coming back, and coming back in the same manner in which He had gone away; that is, unobserved by the world and into their midst.

He might come back even while the angels were talking to them.

He ascended to Heaven and came back just as rapidly as that on one occasion after His resurrection.

It was on the morning of His resurrection.

Mary met Him and would have touched Him with her hands of adoration and love; but He bade her not to touch Him, telling her that He had "*not yet ascended* to His Father." Then He bade her go and tell His brethren that *He was ascending,* that He was even *then* in the act of ascending to His Father and theirs.

He would not allow her to touch Him because He was ascending at that moment to Heaven.

But the same evening He stood in the midst of His disciples.

Between the morning when He met Mary and the evening when He stood in their midst and said, "Peace be unto you," *He had ascended to Heaven and returned.* (See John 20:11-19.)

He might then come back while the angels were talking with them; therefore the angels bade them not to be

"gazing" up into Heaven, but to go back to Jerusalem and be found of Him, if He should return, doing the work He had committed to them.

They were not to be "gazing," but "waiting."

But while they were waiting they were to be working.

He Himself had said:

"Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, SHALL FIND SO DOING." Matthew 24:46.

This then is the attitude of the church.

Waiting for the first stage of the Coming, waiting for the Parousia, waiting for the secret Presence, waiting for the shout that shall lift into His presence; but so working in His name, so occupying every moment, so buying up opportunities that if she should, indeed, be caught away into the air to meet Him, she would go and not be *empty-handed.*

Let *us* then do what our hands find to do, buying up opportunities for ourselves, walking in the pathway of the good works wherein He has before ordained that we should walk, not gazing up into Heaven, nor busied with the sequence, or forecast of events on earth; not occupied with the movements in the East, the defection of the Church, or the condition of society, as though these things could, for a moment, be better evidence of His approach than His own faithful promise: "In an hour when ye think not;" or, His assurance of imminency in the solemn, yet tender exhortation to "Watch."

Let us indeed have an intelligent apprehension of the times and the events, so far as these things are the endorsement of His Word, the emphasis of His prophecies, and the foreview concerning the days when the church shall be gone.

Let us understand that every moment the platform is

being put together for the concluding acts in the drama of time; that all things in Heaven and in earth are moving forward to the Consummation; let us accept all things as the dotting of the i and the crossing of the t in the plan of Him to whom all His works are known from the beginning of the world, but let us recognize that the Parousia, the secret presence of our Lord in the upper air, and our sudden translation to His side, are not bound up with, nor dependent on, any of these events; and that His coming for us is as liable and imminent now, as any moment when He bade His disciples to watch and wait; and that in our ears as in theirs, He utters the solemn admonition:

"What I say unto you, I say unto all,
"WATCH."

The Signs of the Times

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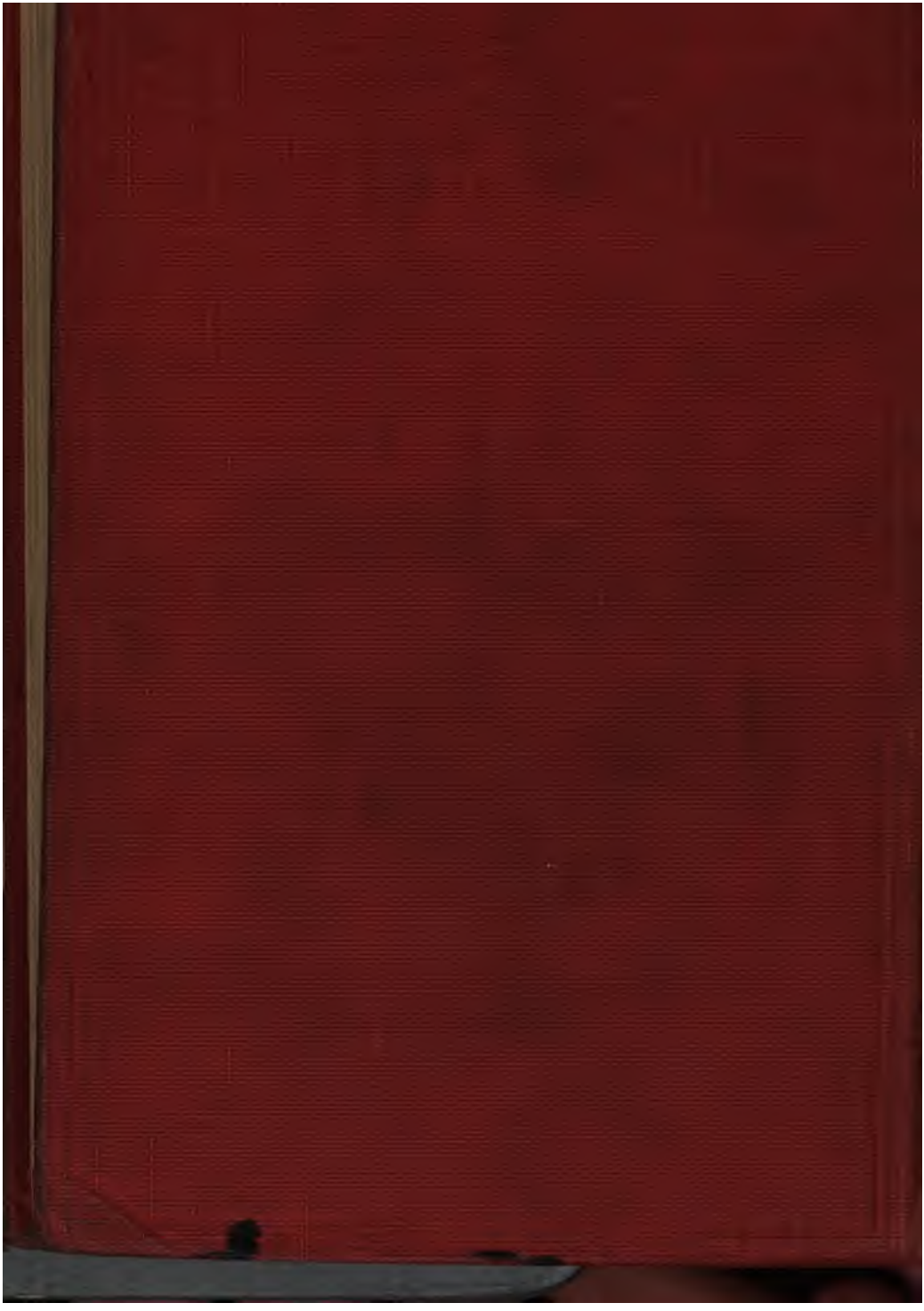
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